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SIGHT AND SOUND



The Film Quarterly



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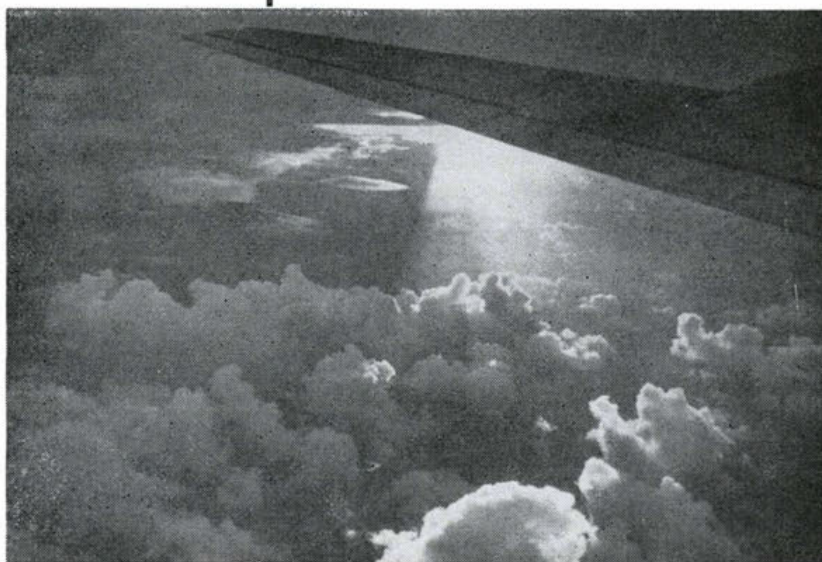
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SIGHT AND SOUND

The International Film Quarterly

VOLUME 27 No. 1 SUMMER 1957

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THE FRONT PAGE

SEVERAL weeks ago it was announced that A.B.C. Television had bought the rights to 25 films produced by the late Sir Alexander Korda. The cost was an estimated £50,000; the films (they include *The Private Life of Henry VIII*, *The Ghost Goes West*, *Lady Hamilton*) will be shown on 25 consecutive Saturday evenings, beginning in the autumn. The announcement produced some interesting reactions. From Tom Driberg, television critic of the *New Statesman*, came the comment that, "it is a retrograde step to rely at all substantially in [television] programme-building on films made for the cinema. To pay this large sum for 25 old movie films, and to feature them so prominently for 25 weeks running, is to confess, or to imply, that there is a shortage of live, or specially filmed, TV material".

In fact and inevitably there must be such a shortage, despite the representations of organisations such as Equity, whose spokesman declared in this context that "we are against showing all cinema films on television". An obvious way to meet the problem is through the showing of old pictures—or any pictures that the film industry is prepared to release. In America, of course, this has already happened on the most extensive scale. Although British television has not as yet approached anything like the American round-the-clock programming, it is clear that the product problem will increase as television operations themselves increase. The sale of the Korda films is the biggest deal of this kind yet made in Britain, and may well prove significant for the future. British distributors have considerably less inducement than the Americans to dispose of their old pictures to TV, since the financial return is inevitably so much less. But it seems very possible that films which might not attract audiences if reissued to the cinemas may still hold them in their own homes. This is a problem for the cinema exhibitor.

Mr. George Singleton, President of the Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association, appears to have few doubts: "the films are 20 years old at least and they have exhausted their value as film entertainment . . . perhaps the public will now appreciate how good modern films are, after watching 25 weeks of these old ones". There is a slight air of whistling in the dark about this statement, just as there is a reluctance to face economic facts in Equity's objection to the showing of any cinema films on TV. There seems little doubt that we will soon be seeing many more pictures on television, and the American example indicates that they will not prove unpopular. In any case, both cinema and television industries are bound to watch audience reactions in the autumn with considerable interest, and perhaps some apprehension.

* * *

With something in the region of 7,000,000 television sets operating in Britain, as against fewer than a quarter of a million eight years ago, cinema admissions continue to fall. Mr. Clifford Barclay, speaking at the Cinematograph Exhibitors Conference last May, stated that: "for the present, it is a fact that for every new television set purchased by the public, approximately 50 admissions are lost to the cinema". Audiences, he said, had fallen off by 315 million

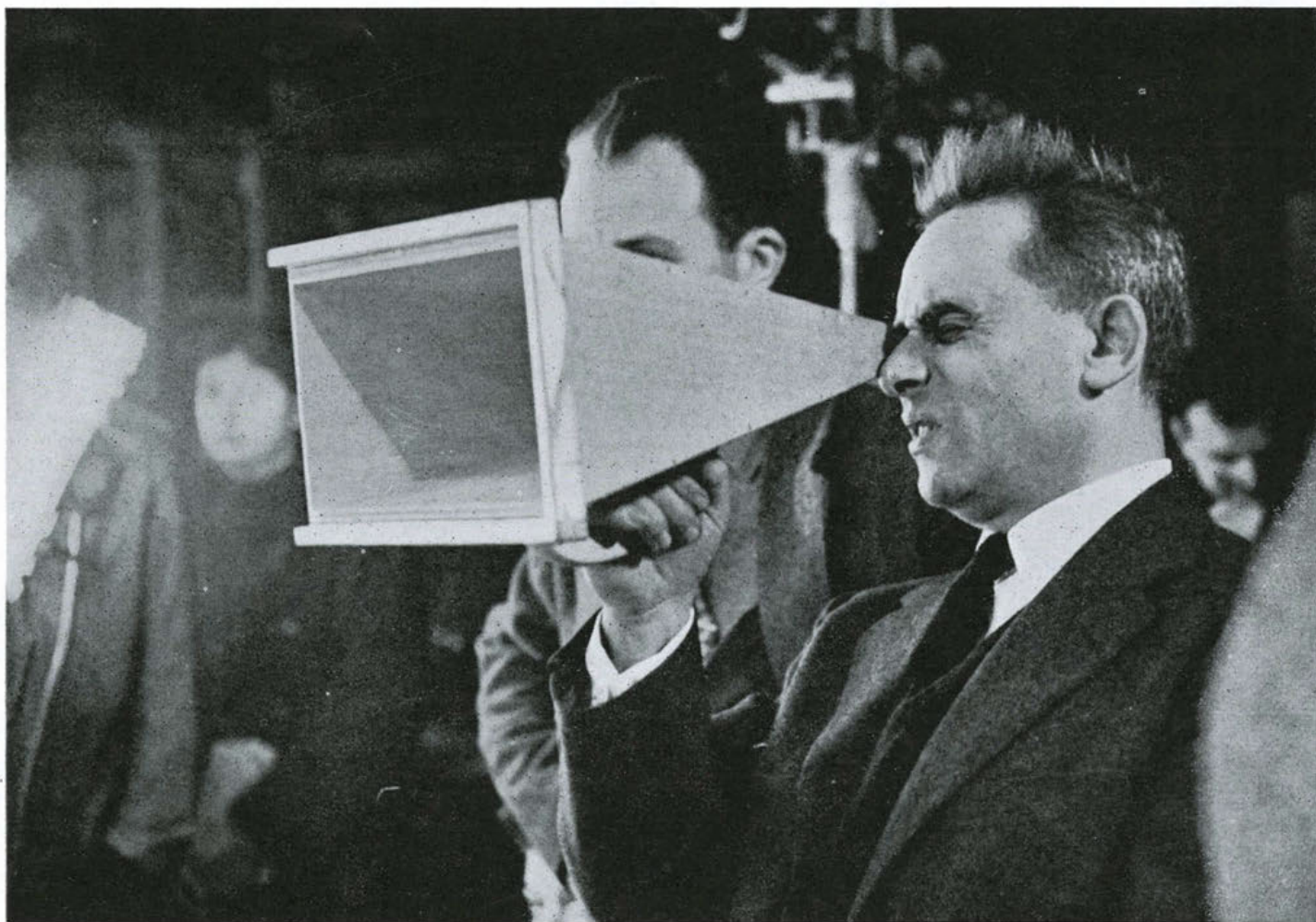
since 1949; at the same rate of decline, another 170 million fewer tickets would be sold by 1960. The situation is not a new one for the British film industry, but there are indications that it is now being more sternly and positively faced.

In another major speech at the C.E.A. Conference, a significant survey of the condition of the industry, Mr. John Davis, managing director of the Rank Organisation, expressed opinions not unlike those of some American production chiefs. "Nothing", he said, "can stop a material contraction in the number of cinemas operating in the Western world . . . only those with good earning potential will be retained". He forecast a general move towards the single feature programme, and a considerable increase in the number of continental films generally released in Britain, to fill the gap left by the American product shortage. (The Rank Organisation, of course, is itself active in production in Europe, and has lately given circuit releases to a number of continental pictures.) Mr. Davis also put forward some suggestions which are not in themselves new, but remain fairly remote possibilities. Large screen television systems, he said, were being developed; distribution might in future be "through the medium of tape, wire, or through the medium of a scrambled television network"; coin in the slot television "will certainly come".

All, or any of these advances might radically change the pattern of distribution; and Mr. Davis's call for a "rationalisation" of the industry, a more economical and streamlined method of operation, is a significant recognition of the problem. The sale of the Korda films is also significant. The film industry is bound to readjust and reassess its policy, and part of this readjustment may take the form of a more open-handed approach to television, a coming to terms with a competitor which need not necessarily be an enemy.

* * *

The photograph of Erich von Stroheim on the opposite page shows him as he appeared at the time of his visit to London three years ago. Karel Reisz wrote then in *SIGHT AND SOUND* of his "extraordinary mixture of personal charm and bluntness, sincerity and pomp, love of appearance and rigid adherence to principle". He was a man with a right to be bitter, and about the past he could be bitter. But the fact that he had not directed a picture for 25 years before his death is a comment on the cinema rather than on Stroheim. In *Greed*, *The Wedding March* and *Foolish Wives* he created at least three extraordinary and enduring works; in his playing, notably in *La Grande Illusion* and in the sombre ironies of *Sunset Boulevard*, he continued to create long after he was unable to direct. Stroheim, Griffith and Chaplin were the great triumvirate of the American silent cinema; Eisenstein, Pudovkin and Dovzhenko of the Soviet cinema. Now only Chaplin remains. Ivor Montagu writes about the work of Dovzhenko in this issue of *SIGHT AND SOUND*, in which we also publish tributes to Max Ophuls, a film-maker whose career as a director began almost as Stroheim's was ending, and an artist of great taste and elegance, impeccable craftsmanship and decorative flair. There can be few years in which the cinema has lost so many of its great men.



H-G Clouzot directs his new melodrama, "Les Espions", the story of a spy ring which operates from a lunatic asylum.

In the Picture

Italian Notes

ROBERT HAWKINS writes: An American "invasion" of sorts is at present under way here. While Joseph L. Mankiewicz is finishing his *A Quiet American* in Rome, and planning more work here in the near future, David O. Selznick, now with the aid of Charles Vidor, is about to complete his new version of *A Farewell To Arms* on Italian locations. Richard Conte, Jo Van Fleet and Anthony Perkins have come and gone after working on René Clément's *Sea Wall*, also at Cinecittà. And there are more to come: Roy Rowland directs Mario Lanza soon in *The Hills of Rome*; Esther Williams is due in any day for *The Islander*; Jean Negulesco threatens to do for Naples what he did for Rome with *Three Coins in the Fountain*, the film to be sponsored, it is said, by the city of Naples itself.

Meanwhile, some Italian plans are moving ahead, though this is mainly a period of transition. Leopoldo Trieste, whose first film, *Città di Notte*, will be seen shortly, will make another picture, also with and about youth. Titled *L'Assegno (The Cheque)*, it stars Jacqueline Sassard, the girl discovered by Lattuada for his *Guendalina*. Franco Rossi, little heard from since *Amici per la*

Pelle, plans *Il Romanzo di Rosa Bathurst*; and Pietro Germi follows his award-winning *Il Ferroviere* with two projects: *L'Uomo di Paglia* and *Tabù*.

De Sica will direct *Le Bambole (The Dolls)*, from a story by Zavattini, John Dayton and Ennio Flajano, as soon as he finds time in between his frantic acting spree. After this, he will probably do another Zavattini subject—*Il Giudizio Universale*. Fellini, having apparently decided to turn down several offers to direct in the United States, has signed a term contract with Dino de Laurentiis. His next film will probably be *Le Libere Donne di Magliano*, about a women's asylum. Castellani has moved back the start of *Imperial Venus* until Gina Lollobrigida becomes available. He is meanwhile doing script work as well as reworking the second half of his latest film (still unreleased): *I Sogni nel Cassetto*.

Press Conference

DEREK HILL writes: Henry Fonda, in London recently in connection with *Twelve Angry Men*, described his plans as being so vague that he didn't even know whether he would make another film. He was about to go to Italy, as he was anxious to pick his own translators and actors for the dubbing of *Twelve Angry Men*.

He would never, he said, make another film with Ford. Why? "That's a loaded question". But he later expressed dissatisfaction with the screen version of *Mister Roberts*. "Those of us who loved the play knew what it might have been", he said. Fonda described his first meeting with Ford, who had insisted that he should play in *Young Mr. Lincoln* against the actor's own inclinations. The film was not apparently among Fonda's favourites. He was more enthusiastic about *The Grapes of Wrath* and also about Preston Sturges' *The Lady Eve*. He'd seen Sturges in Paris recently. "He's as volatile as ever—I can't understand why he's not doing anything". But every mention of Ford seemed to produce the same phrase—"the honeymoon is over". He had been very attracted by Irwin

Shaw's original script for *War and Peace*, "but it was so altered that Shaw had his name taken off the credits".

Sidney Lumet, director of *Twelve Angry Men*, had astonished Fonda during the production. "I knew he was an actor's director, but I was quite unprepared for his brilliant organisational talent. He shot practically the whole film by moving round the table twice, shooting all the scenes with the same set-up together, then moving on. When he'd done it once for the daytime lighting, he went round again for the night scenes. Despite all the continuity complications this involved, he was never once wrong". Lumet has also directed *Stage Struck*, another production of Fonda's independent company, in which the actor stars with Susan Strasberg; it was again shot in New York, partly on location.

Hollywood Notes

ALBERT JOHNSON writes: The most flamboyant personalities in Hollywood during the spring were the Italian actresses Sophia Loren and Anna Magnani, both working on new films at Paramount. Loren's initial American visit was widely publicised, and after an extensive rehearsal period, she went to work under Delbert Mann's direction in Eugene O'Neill's *Desire Under the Elms*, with Burl Ives and Anthony Perkins co-starred. Magnani's new American picture is *Obsession* (which has nothing to do with the Visconti classic), with Anthony Quinn and Anthony Franciosa. The actress will this time be working with George Cukor, a partnership of considerable promise.

20th Century-Fox seems to be dominating the literary film-rush with a Hemingway halo and star-studded casts. *The Sun Also Rises*, a personal production by Darryl Zanuck, is now shooting under Henry King's direction. Tyrone Power, Ava Gardner, Errol Flynn, Mel Ferrer and Eddie Albert are principally involved. There is also, of course, the Selznick production of *A Farewell to Arms*, directed by Charles Vidor and featuring Jennifer Jones, Rock Hudson and de Sica. David O. Selznick recently told the press that he will prepare Scott Fitzgerald's novel about psychiatry among the expatriates, *Tender is the Night*, and also a *Mary Magdalene* script, for two forthcoming Fox releases. Both films will star Jennifer Jones.

From MGM, it is reported that Michael Kidd, the noted choreographer and dancer (*Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*, *It's Always Fair Weather*) will direct the new Danny Kaye musical, *Merry Andrew*. This is the tale of a circus clown, and Kaye has already tried out several of his routines before audiences during recent vaudeville tours. The score for the picture is being written by Johnny Mercer and Saul Chaplin.

Rock 'n' roll films are still coming along steadily. Judy Tyler, a newcomer from Broadway, where she appeared in the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical *Pipe Dream*, seems to have been swept into the trend. After a first appearance in United Artists' *Bop Girl Goes Calypso*, she has been signed by MGM to play Elvis Presley's leading lady in his new film, *Jailhouse Rock*, which may be self-explanatory. Speaking of titles, perhaps the most curious item recently completed by one of the smaller studios is something called *I Was a Teenage Werewolf*. This obviously must be seen to be explained.

Technirama

JOHN GILLET writes: Technirama, the latest refinement in wide-screen processes, developed by the Technicolor Corporation, was recently demonstrated in London. Designed to improve colour definition and depth of focus and to achieve maximum compatibility with existing processing and projection facilities, the system uses standard 35mm. colour negative which moves horizontally through the camera, registering eight-perforation frames. An anamorphic attachment laterally compresses the image by a factor of 1.5 : 1. From this negative, Technicolor can produce three types of print: (1) CinemaScope, reproducing the whole frame area, with a compression ratio increased to the standard 2 : 1; (2) double-frame, corresponding to the negative in size and shape and with an anamorphic factor of 1.5 : 1; and (3) non-anamorphic VistaVision-type prints incorporating the central portion of the frame only, with an aspect ratio of 1.85 : 1.

The demonstration included extracts from some dozen Technirama films, including Pietrangeli's *Souvenir d'Italie*, Jean-Paul Le Chanois' new *Les Misérables*, *The Monte Carlo Story* (the first film made in the system) and *Sayonara*. These were shown in

CinemaScope versions, and the improvement on previous systems was evident. Less satisfactory was a comparison between a CinemaScope-type extract from Ealing's *Davy* and a non-anamorphic VistaVision version; the clipping of the frame sides here gave an unavoidable sense of constriction. The highlights of the demonstration were the double-frame (or "road-show") prints. Not only was the colour definition outstanding, but the material itself seemed to justify the use of the vast screen. Some tests from *War and Peace*, showing the Retreat from Moscow, enhanced the forlorn grandeur of the released version; and a long, stupendous aerial shot from René Clément's *The Sea Wall* was a technical *tour de force* of the highest order.

Awards for Experiment

PLANS FOR NEXT year's Brussels Exhibition, in which between 40 and 50 countries will participate, include three film projects. The organisers have announced programmes of the "best films of all time", a world festival of contemporary films, and, more especially, a large-scale international competition for experimental films. Open to "works which through their form show an attempt to renew cinematographic language, or through their content approach territories not generally frequented by film-makers", the competition should benefit from the obvious concern to avoid any narrow or pedantic interpretation of the word "experimental". The experimental cinema, the organisers state, "has no precise frontiers... it may be poetic and lyrical, a story or a documentary, is sometimes satirical, often abstract". Clair, Bunuel, Carné, Renoir, Eisenstein, Cavalcanti and Cocteau are named as directors whose first films were all "deliberately experimental", and this list suggests that the competition will set its sights high and use the broadest terms of reference.

The competition takes place in April, 1958, and is open to films from any country, of any length, sound or silent, and on 16 mm. or 35 mm. Films which have received awards at international festivals are not eligible, however, nor are pictures made before 1955. The prizes, to be awarded by a jury, include two major awards and six minor awards; the two Grand Prix films will also receive cash prizes of 500,000 and 250,000 Belgian francs (£3,750-£1,785) sponsored by the industrial firms Gevaert and S.I.B.I.S. Film-makers interested in further information about this ambitious competition can obtain it from the Cinémathèque de Belgique, Palais des Beaux Arts, Ravenstein, Brussels.



Maria Schell and Jean Marais in Luchino Visconti's "Notti Bianche", adapted from a story by Dostoevski.

LOOKING FOR DOCUMENTARY

1: The background to production

by DAVID ROBINSON

THE aim of these articles—largely stimulated by John Maddison's "Open Letter" in a recent issue of *SIGHT AND SOUND*—is to offer an impartial survey of the state of so-called "documentary" film-making in Britain. It is intended for those who know vaguely that documentary is *Drifters* and *Song of Ceylon* and *Night Mail* and *Housing Problems* and that it is all rather dull and sixteen-mill., although Free Cinema (for which people queue) is somehow tied up with it. My researches have been quite simple and basic; I have read what people have written, and I have gone to as many as possible of those who work in documentary cinema, and asked them about their work and looked at their films.

The survey represents, intentionally, an innocent's search for documentary at a time of evident change and excitement—intellectual, social, political. Every period must seem just as exciting to those who are young in it; but there does seem, today, a special and inescapable sense of things happening, and happening quickly. Politics are conceived in terms as different from those of 1930 as the Hydrogen Bomb is different from the Lee-Enfield. The social snakes-and-ladders of the past half-century are beginning to work out; and the disturbing new arrangements which result have found their first expressions in *Lucky Jim* and *Room at the Top* and *Look Back in Anger* and *The Uses of Literacy*. (It seems a long time since Denton Welch was a watchword, only six or seven years ago.) In the arts, there is a conscious and active desire for approximation, so that "Bernard Miles hopes to present Frankie Howerd in Plautus's *Pseudolus*, translated by Patric Dickinson . . .", while John Minton's last picture was concerned with a Hollywood myth. There is an increasing realisation that no art is an island, any more than a man or country or race can afford to be. The rebels, if they are still looking for their causes, have at least found their voices. The English Stage Company is the first genuinely experimental theatre in London, and it is sensationally successful; no political society for years has had such an

energetic and convincing send-off as the Universities and Left Review Club.

Where, in relation to all this excitement and activity, do we find British Documentary, which twenty years ago was probably the most exciting cinema in the world, with a potential that seemed unlimited?

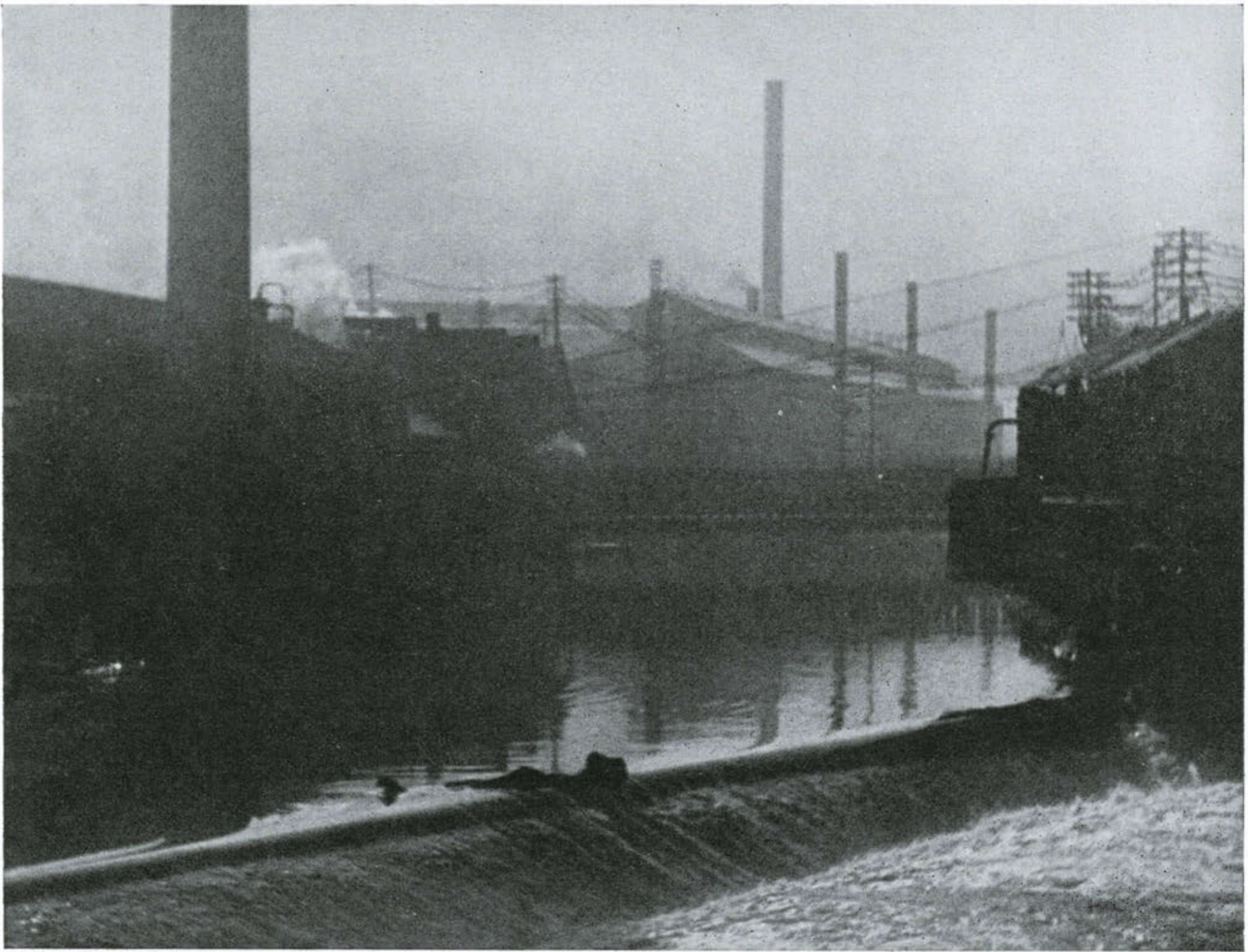
1

For a word with so little intrinsic meaning, *documentary* has acquired powerful overtones. From being synonymous with excitement and virility, it became—to the shame of us all—the symbol of dead tedium. "Dull and documentary" wrote Dilys Powell of one film; and the apposition seemed quite natural. Quite recently film-makers and exhibitors still pleaded with the press to refrain from using the nasty word in connection with their films.

The term was Grierson's; and he never finally defined it. His classic explanation, "The creative treatment of reality", is not a definition at all. In the broadest sense, *Drifters* and *Giant* and the *Mona Lisa* and *In Memoriam* and *Alice in Wonderland* are all creative treatments of reality; and a narrower interpretation would exclude *The Undeclared* along with them. It would take a good deal of argument to arrive at terms which would comprehend all the work of the Crown Film Unit and exclude *The Men or Mandy* or *The Young Stranger*; and finally the game of definition hardly seems worth while. "The important distinction", writes Gavin Lambert,

is not between the slick feature and vital reportage, but surely between the living and the dead, the true and the false, in any form or style. . . . The sooner we stop affixing justificatory labels like "documentary" and "neo-realism" the better; there is as much difference in their own way between *Song of Ceylon* and *Housing Problems* as between *La Terra Trema* and *Bicycle Thieves*.

Nevertheless, in this country there is an inescapable distinction between the ordinary commercial cinema, which rarely concerns itself with real life and real people,



"Dull and documentary" or "observation a little richer than it was" . . . ? Humphrey Jennings' "Spare Time".

and the area of specialised cinema in which we are likely to discover "documentary"—a distinction which makes it possible and essential to recognise a particular kind of film-making.

Fortunately Grierson has always been ready to produce a new definition to suit his immediate thesis; and the most satisfactory account of the documentary approach, as it will be understood in these articles, is this:

The documentary idea, after all, demands no more than that the affairs of our time shall be brought to the screen in any fashion which strikes the imagination and makes observation a little richer than it was. At one level the vision may be journalistic; at another it may rise to poetry and drama. At another level again its artistic quality may lie in the mere lucidity of its exposition.

That "demands no more than . . ." is something of an understatement. On the one hand "imagination . . . observation . . . vision" are subject to the often inhibiting economic conditions under which documentary is produced. On the other is the conspiracy to ignore a good many of "the affairs of our time", to regard as morbid, if not positively obscene, the film-maker who seeks to show on the screen subjects which are considered fair game for White Papers and the press.

2

I do not think there is much use discussing what to do with a medium unless we are talking about it in terms of access to the means of production—JOHN GRIERSON.

If it is difficult to define conceptually, the documentary film has at least some fairly obvious practical distinctions. It is, in the first place, not at all the same merchandise as the commercial feature film which is, quite simply, cash-sale story-telling. The documentary hardly ever achieves featured place in commercial cinema programmes; or provides an attraction to draw audiences. It offers no immediately obvious commercial interest.

There are, nevertheless, one or two misconceptions about the documentary film and the commercial cinema. One is that exhibitors do not like to show documentaries and that audiences do not like to see them. This is to overestimate the ordinary exhibitor's discrimination as much as to underestimate the good nature of general audiences, who are on the whole infinitely more tolerant than, say, audiences at the National Film Theatre. West End cinema audiences, for example, will sit patiently through the National Coal Board's *Mining Review* series, some of the most esoteric of all sponsored films.

Nor have distributors any objection to the "interest"



"The important films to make . . ." 1935: "Housing Problems"

short as such. On the contrary, they are mostly glad enough to handle anything they can lay hands on, as long as they can get it for a low enough outright price, or—better still—free. Until recently the advantageous award of Eady grants to British short films produced an interesting situation. While Eady money was awarded to feature films at the rate of not more than 30% of box-office takings, in the case of shorts the proportion might be increased to as much as 80%. This meant that the distributor of a complete programme could benefit substantially if a considerable proportion of the box-office takings was allotted to the shorts in his programme. During the period of the Eady fund, it was quite possible for British documentary films to bring back to the distributor considerably more than their original cost.

Unfortunately the profit was rarely passed on to the producer. With an endless supply of sponsored material—Government and private; entertaining, dull or plain deadly—to be had for the asking, distributors were not keen to pay a fair price for independently produced shorts. Quite recently a well-known producer who had shot a quantity of interesting travel material, in CinemaScope and colour, decided to turn it into a one- or two-reel documentary. The highest distribution offer he could get for it was £500—less than half the cost of assembling the already shot material. Other documentaries—*Thursday's Children* was an example—have waited years for economic distribution contracts. There are exceptions, of course—such as Countryman Films' *World of Life* series; but on the whole the difficulty of competing with an unlimited supply of free sponsored films severely discourages independent production.

Failure to obtain a fair distribution price or promise means, of course, that it is very difficult for the N.F.F.C. to make loans to independent documentary producers. Of the eighty-five short films which have received N.F.F.C. grants in the last eight years, the majority have been "entertainment" shorts or factual series (*The World of Life* accounts for thirty or so of the number). Very few can properly be regarded as documentaries.

3

With independent production narrowly restricted by reason of the hand-out distributors can expect from sponsors, the bulk of documentary film-making must be sought among sponsored production. As it was developed before the war—largely through the imagination and energy of the arch-P.R.O.'s, John Grierson and Sir Stephen Tallents—sponsorship was a very remarkable artistic phenomenon—a modern patronage of the most costly of all the arts. *Sponsorship*, however, is a word whose meaning has been interpreted too largely. The bulk of the several hundred so-called "sponsored" films made annually in this country are not

"sponsored" at all in the strict sense. The purchase of a film for a specific instructional or advertising use is no more sponsorship or patronage than the purchase of a typewriter or an advertisement hoarding. An American manual called *Films in Business and Industry* lists thirty-nine uses of the motion picture ranging from "Training Office Help" to "To Secure Additional Capital", none of which is sponsorship in the old sense of making a film with no more interested intent than the public service and the credit of making the film. There is no heading which could conceivably cover *Housing Problems* or *Louisiana Story*.

The fact is, of course, that this conception of sponsorship, in which the film is more important than the sponsor's short-term publicity needs, has become increasingly rare since the war. The reason is not that sponsors have become less enlightened or that P.R.O.'s have necessarily become less persuasive. It is, on the contrary, a combination of the dangerous little extra learning and appreciation of the medium and the more stringent demands of post-war economy. Before the war,

It was largely a problem of educating sponsors to make the kind of films which we as film artists and as social observers thought were then the important films to make. It was in these terms that we saw opportunities of inviting—and I stress the word "inviting"—the sponsors to use this medium as a public service, as well as a form of art.—PAUL ROTH, speaking in Edinburgh, 1952.

Films were less expensive (*Children at School*, 28 minutes, cost £2,581; *Housing Problems*, 16 minutes, £1,262. In 1946, *Children on Trial*, 60 minutes, cost £24,800). Where there was money, it was freer; sponsors knew or cared little about the medium, and were prepared to let the P.R.O. have his fling.

Nowadays, however, sponsors have learned the specific jobs of instruction and advertising that the film can do; and when films are so expensive and there is so little money to throw about, it seems to them only reasonable to use this money on something whose value can be assessed in precise and narrow terms. "We have told seventy million people to smoke our cigarettes". The fact is comforting whether the seventy million have listened or not. There are elementary manuals to help sponsors assess the films that are made for them, so that—

. . . they are inclined to think that they can make better films than we can. More than once I have been tempted to say to a sponsor: "You should be making this film, not me".—PAUL ROTH.

If the result is that films are nowadays used with less imagination and less responsibility, it is as much the loss of the community at large as it is the sponsor's.

4

We operate in a new world but are not yet possessed of it. We have given ourselves a new kind of society, but have not yet given ourselves the new kind of imagination or the new conception of citizenship which makes it tolerable.—JOHN GRIERSON.

To look for a more imaginative and disinterested use of the film at the power-points of our society is not to demand an unrealistic or idealistic altruism. "Sleeping or walking, we are concerned each day in an interdependency, one with another, which in fact makes us each our brother's keeper. . . We operate in a system of complex interdependency". In this state of interdependency the free passage of ideas is essential to a proper functioning of society; but the traffic has become intolerably congested over the last twenty years. The means of communication have multiplied, until their voices have become a babble. And in the babble the voices whose interest and duty is to bring "the affairs of our time . . . to the screen in any fashion which strikes the imagination and makes observation a little richer than it was" have become alarmingly feeble. The potential of the film as the

most effective means of large-scale dissemination of ideas has only increased with the growth of television as the most effective means of exhibition. But the responsible appreciation of the power of the medium has not grown. The field has largely been ceded to the propaganda film and the advertising film, and eventually to everything that numbs the imagination, that makes observation a little poorer.

Before the War, largely through the G.P.O. Film Unit (the Empire Marketing Board was an early victim of economies), Government sponsorship, although its scale was modest, was highly imaginative, and a splendid example to other sponsors. By 1939 the value of the film in a cohesive national life was beginning to be recognised, so that—after a few clashes between the new Grierson-trained P.R. men and Edwardian officialdom—the Ministry of Information undertook and achieved the massive programme of film use which is now a matter of history. Since the War ended, however, successive Governments, Left and Right, have sacrificed the national information services in the name of economy, just as the E.M.B. was jettisoned in 1933. Today, with the work of the information services divided, it is difficult to assess the actual sum allocated to what Tallents called “the art of national projection”. At least we can be sure that it is no more than a fraction of one per cent of the annual national expenditure, and that only a very small proportion of it is allocated to Government film-making. The inadequacy of the British Council’s annual grant of some £30,000 for films to promote its own particular work overseas only becomes obvious when we break it down and find, for instance, that it means a sum of about £8 per week for the whole of Japan. Since 1951 the Council has been forced virtually to cease production and rely on the purchase of prints of films only incidentally related to its purposes.

The Central Office of Information has rather less than a quarter of a million pounds a year to cover its entire film activities, and cannot (as the old M.o.I. did) initiate production itself; films must be requested by individual Government departments—an arrangement whose disadvantages are only too obvious. A minority of C.o.I. films are made specifically for home use.*

With increasing costs and stringent economies, and especially since the Crown Film Unit was disbanded, Government Film production has shrunk to a mean shadow. Even after films have been made, the funds available for making prints are pathetically small. One hears constantly of complaints from agents overseas that the few worn prints available to them are no competition against the more lavish provisions of the information services of other countries. In a state in which military disarmament can arouse so much dissension, intellectual disarmament has been accepted with remarkably little fuss.

What seems most serious is the failure to provide films for home use. During the war no one questioned the value of the film and of the projection of ourselves to ourselves, as a means of national unification, as a means to give ourselves “the new kind of imagination or the new conception of citizenship” which Grierson speaks of. The reduction of Government film production must seem to imply that the job is ended, that there is no longer a need for unification or for new imagination and conceptions. A Covent Garden porter, after seeing Ford of Dagenham’s *Every Day Except Christmas*, said spontaneously: “It makes you proud to be British and to work in the market”. It is a year or two since a British documentary aroused such sentiments.

* Since this was written, the 1957-8 Civil Estimates have been published, showing a substantial increase in the C.o.I.’s film production budget. Moreover it is anticipated that Dr. Charles Hill’s expected statement on Government Information Services will be concerned with significant expansions.

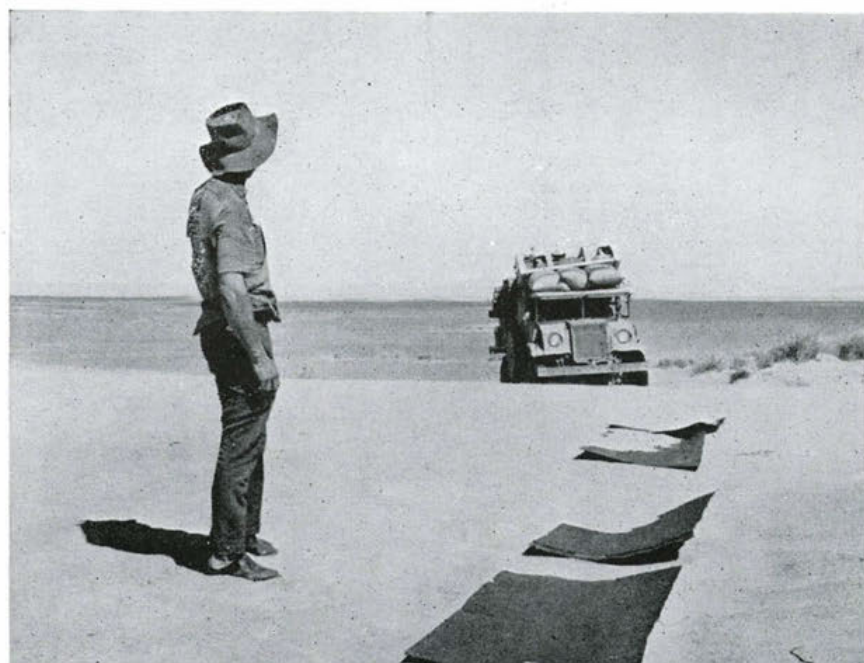
New territories in documentary: Shell in Australia. 1953: “The Back of Beyond”.

The fear of establishing adequate Government information services may arise in part from a suspicion that the administration might “seek partisan advantage” in them. The record of film sponsorship by the major political parties is not one to give strong grounds to such a fear. The Conservative Central Office, it is true, is proud of its record of propaganda film-making. It has a fairly large production programme of films partly intended for use on television as party political broadcasts, partly for distribution *via* mobile projection units to constituency parties. In either case, the appeal is likely to be largely to the converted. Unexpectedly, the Labour Party has much less confidence in the film. In all they have produced only three films in the past few years: one to celebrate the party jubilee in 1950, and two party political broadcasts (one of them directed by Paul Rotha) last year. Apart from these, Transport House distributes, for the benefit of constituency parties, a few films by other sponsors, such as the Gas Council and the Transport Commission. The view of a spokesman is discouraged and discouraging:

Films are only subsidiary to our other propaganda activities. . . . All our constituency members can read, so pamphlets are just as good. . . . We’ve seen the Conservative films and don’t think much of them; and we know what they cost, and can’t afford that much out of party funds. And good films would cost even more.

Of the nationalised industries, the Gas Council, the National Coal Board and the British Transport Commission all have programmes of film use; and the last two have their own production units. The Coal Board’s programme is closely geared to its own immediate internal needs—training and staff welfare. The principle that “You don’t have to sell coal” seems temporarily at least to have obscured the possibility of any wider use of public film-making. The Gas Council, apart from two films by the late Richard Massingham (*Facts and Fancies* and *Family Album*) has largely limited itself to the rather crude selling approach applied by one or two soap manufacturers before the war; short moral drolleries with popular comedians like Richard Hearne and Gilbert Harding.

The Transport Commission on the other hand has a large programme of production, and has achieved considerable success in obtaining distribution—theatrical and non-theatrical—for its films. These films (which will be more fully discussed later) are mostly travelogues of one sort or another, rather glossy, and aimed to encourage tourist traffic in Britain. Its few adventures have been successful—John Krish’s *The Elephant Never Forgets* and Tony Thompson’s *Do You Remember?* are examples. If such films are few and far between, if the Transport Commission



do not use their resources as imaginatively as one might hope, it is, one feels, largely due to their fear of criticism from their owners, the public, who, they anticipate, might resent too obviously liberal an application of the profits.

No such motives deter the largest of the private, capitalist sponsors. The Shell Film Unit has for twenty-four years pursued a policy which must be unrivalled by any commercial sponsor in the world. Although its production maintains a link with the activities of the company in so far as it deals mostly with technological subjects, there is unlimited scope for pure, individual, uninhibited documentary film-making. No Shell film ever gives the impression that the advertisement is more important than the subject of the film. Indeed, the Unit goes to almost absurd lengths to avoid self-advertisement, even painting out the trade-name on tankers or oil drums that incidentally appear in films on petroleum products. In an almost ideal creative set-up, real patronage exists; films are planned directly for the service of the wide public to which the Shell Company feels itself responsible. Shell's policy is outward-looking, and its emphasis is on the establishment of local film units in those areas in which the Company works. The best Shell films are expository psalms to the new technology-ruled world in which the Company stands as so large a symbol; the least successful are those in which Shell film-makers look down and try to discover the human implications of their world (*Song of the Clouds*).

Although less ambitious and less generously endowed, the activities of British Petroleum and the I.C.I. Film Unit more nearly resemble Shell's than those of any other large industrial sponsors. I.C.I.'s films are largely concerned with medicine or the teaching of science. B-P has sponsored among other recent films *The New Explorers*, *Distant Neighbours* and *Speed the Plough*. In the case of both Shell and I.C.I., the place of the Film Units must be recognised as part of a much wider conception of public relations which, extending to almost every activity of the organisations, is characterised in internal personnel services, and externally in the demonstration of a sense of public service and national responsibility. The assumption of such responsibility is not without its rewards. One comes to think of Shell and I.C.I. as national institutions—very little different, except that they are more open-handed and livelier, from the Bank of England and the G.P.O.

There are other private sponsors; but none has developed so large a conception of public responsibility or used films with such imagination. There have been few sponsored documentaries in the strict sense in the last ten years; though a notable exception is Ford of Dagenham's new film *Every Day Except Christmas*. Until now, the Ford Company has not had a distinguished record in this field; certainly it has not emulated the "prestige" policy of its American counterpart; but this film, directed by Lindsay Anderson and apparently the first of a series, promises a new and enlightened approach to sponsorship. It is an example one hopes to see widely followed; undoubtedly it will bring its own rewards. It is sad, though, that the lesson must be re-learned so long after Grierson and Tallents.

6

The general picture of sponsorship is then of a much greater bulk of production than ever before; but of more precise and less imaginative demands from the films made. There has been a tremendous increase in the use of the "tool" film and the advertising film; and a reduction in the number of "prestige" films. Sponsors know more precisely what they want, without being any more aware of the art with which they are playing or the problems of the artist whom they are employing.

In the pattern of sponsorship the relations between sponsor and producer are of first importance. The alliance of sponsor, producer and director should be a creative collaboration;

but—especially outside the internal film units—it rarely is. Very occasionally of course the partnership really is ideal: producers will tell you that it *always* is (you can't slang the customer when business—if it is not as bad as it was—has still to be canvassed). Only directors and writers will tell you frankly just how impossible the collaboration can be. Paul Dickson's *The Film That Never Was* (produced by James Carr for World Wide, for C.o.I., for the Ministry of Labour) is more a documentary on film sponsorship than on joint consultation, showing as it does the insuperable difficulties of the film-maker's job when he is subjected to pressure from all sides. (In the film the director abandons the job because of the failure of the Ministry, the Management Representative and the Union Representative to agree on the script). Few sponsors have a single voice; some, like the British Productivity Council, represent the views of a multiplicity of not easily reconciled interests.

Few sponsors recognise that film-making is an art, that in buying a real film you are taking the same risk as in commissioning a painting; that you are buying the services of an artist and that your own aesthetic views are likely to mar rather than improve his work. To help the sponsor overcome such a sentimental and unbusinesslike approach, the manual *Films in Business and Industry* advises him:

In investigating a producer, do not be over-awed by the size of his establishment. . . . Above all, do not let the romanticism of the film world sway you from good business practice.

Subsequent chapters include one on "Supervising a Producer", including sixteen questions to ask in evaluating a script, to "serve as a check against many of the short-comings often encountered".

7

The changing demands have produced a new generation of producers. There are still, of course, companies like Realist and Anvil who maintain very much the Grierson outlook in their work; and Edgar Anstey (British Transport), Donald Alexander (National Coal Board), Stuart Legg and Sir Arthur Elton (Shell) are all old Griersonians. But many of the new generation of commercial producers are very different people with very different outlooks. At the top of the scale are the small number of men like Leon Clore at Basic and James Carr at World Wide who have the vision and skill to satisfy the sponsor without compromising the director; and who have the courage to use young talent rather than rely exclusively on the tried and true and tired. Most of the more gifted of the under-thirties and under-forties—Paul Dickson, Lindsay Anderson, Guy Brenton, Max Anderson, Margaret Thompson, Walter Lasally—have at some time worked for one or other of these companies.

At the other end of the scale is the much more numerous class of producers who will tell you: "This isn't an art any more; it's a business". Speaking for themselves, they are absolutely right. They are concerned with the creation of film-factories; and in their favour it must be conceded that most sponsors seem perfectly happy with their work. Their films are handsomely photographed, often in colour. They are the biggest, brightest and glossiest; and have much the same relation to real documentary as the Poet Laureate's verses on royal occasions in *The Times* have to real poetry. Quite often there is no director as such; just a cameraman (cameraman-director, so-called), an editor and a commentary writer. The commentary will be read by one of the recognised group of smooth BBC commentators; the music will be familiar library material. But the sponsor knows where he is. This is a mediocrity that the least informed can recognise to his comfort. I asked one of these producers which he considered to be his best films. "We have no outstanding films", he said. "We try not to make them. It's not in our interest. If we made one exceptionally good film for a sponsor, he'd expect the next one to be as good; and you just can't maintain a high standard con-



"The important films to make . . ." 1957: Guy Brenton's "People Apart".

sistently". As business practice, the argument cannot be faulted.

Between these extremes are something like 140 producers, all more or less busy since the arrival of commercial television floated the industry to near-prosperity. One of the more serious results of the poverty of the years between the late 'forties and 1953-4 was that the industry became something of a closed shop. Following so closely on the end of the war, this meant that for fifteen years very few young men entered the short film industry at all. The situation has now eased somewhat; many more young people are being absorbed; but the gap—the small number of young men in their late twenties and early thirties, at their creative peak—still has a debilitating effect on the industry. One recalls the successes of the early Grierson period, when directors like Anstey, Elton, Wright and Rotha were all in their mid-twenties.

Other things, outside the industry, have changed and are changing. Audiences, after ten years' exposure to the full blast of competing applicants for their attention, are altered. They are better informed; but their powers of attention and concentration and belief have been shattered by the attack:

The "Common man" is forever hearing the multitudinous tones of exhortation and invocation. . . . He goes dead to it all. He develops a strong patina of resistance, a thick and solid skin for not taking notice.

The famous non-theatrical audience, built up by the documentarists in the 'thirties and war period with such painful

pride, has been dispersed, largely by television; but television can beam through to an audience which it would have taken years to reach, in or out of the theatres, before the war. Television, too, has developed new approaches to new problems; many of the subjects formerly treated by the film are now more effectively and more immediately dealt with by television.

The specific tasks that Grierson and his school found for documentary are largely finished; and a good many people have not yet noticed that there is now different work to do and that, even under the restricting conditions in which it must be produced, documentary has still its aims. And the work is being done, notwithstanding the difficulties. *Thursday's Children* and *People Apart* and *David* and *In Prison* (BBC) have been made. Free Cinema and Guy Brenton's Morse Films and certain departments in the BBC and ITV have either broken free from the existing system, or have found the means of expression within it. The Experimental Film Production Fund, administered by the British Film Institute and financed by the film industry, has so far been almost exclusively devoted to new ways of "bringing the affairs of our time to the screen in any fashion which strikes the imagination and makes observation a little richer than it was". These films, the real documentaries that are still being made, and those that are not; and the people who are making them, will be discussed in the second of these two articles.



LOOK AT BRITAIN!

by JOHN BERGER



"I've just seen a marvellous programme of documentaries", I enthused to a young sculptor friend who has no particular interest in cinema.

"Oh! Documentaries", he replied, "You mean those films that are like driving along in a car with the radio on!"

Fair enough. Such a description evokes very well the uneventful, sedentary, official chauffeur-driven quality of the average documentary of the last ten years. Since the war most documentaries have been entirely boring because their content has been censored by those who have made them according to the dictates of the most static, uncreative concern possible: a concern with Prestige—either national or commercial. But the four films in the programme I was discussing, *Free Cinema Three*, have triumphantly broken through this propriety barrier. (That is not to say that they are "shocking"; the need for self-conscious shockers is the natural complement to the handing out of "inoffensive" platitudes.) When one sees this programme one thinks again about Documentary as an art form. On the one hand one realises that a great documentary requires a director of great imaginative talent. (We must go on repeating it until it is understood that in all the arts imagination means the ability to disclose that which exists.) On the other hand one realises that, even with inexperienced or immature direction, a documentary that has been sincerely made and is uncensored in the way I have mentioned, can still remain interesting. It may lack impact, but it will still reveal. A bad novel is usually unreadable; but an honest journal kept by a clumsy writer and thinker often nevertheless supplies material for thought.

The Singing Street, a film in this programme made by the Norton Park Group about children's skipping games and songs in Edinburgh, is too much a scrap book, and lacks any focal centre. But it still contains shots of beauty and meaning. The wind that comes over the Castle and wraps an overcoat gawkily round an 11-plus girl's legs, shifts another one's hair and spreads it out on an invisible pillow. To roller-skate down the centre of the street—suddenly one remembers that just to do that was to be a child. The furious feet of the girl double-skipping between two ropes will remind others of how their mothers forbade skipping in shoes because it wore them out too quickly. The weather, the unconscious liberty of childhood, the social environment—such things are part of the natural raw material of documentary. I do not mean that they are preserved on the final reels automatically, that a documentary director can't go wrong; I mean that, given the compulsion to make a film, the documentary director is already in the midst of life, while the feature director, with the sky as a limit to his budget, may quite likely never even touch earth.

And this fact gives us a clue, I think, to the kind of situation in which a documentary school is likely to flourish. If people want to leave the earth because neither desperate necessity nor clear hopes are there to keep them on it, then to be in the midst of life (and here one must point out that Mrs. Dale is one of the most fabulous discoveries of outer space) will be considered boring, unentertaining, old-fashioned and grim. For various historical reasons far too complicated to go into here, this has been the predominant mood of this country for about a decade. Thus there has been little impulse to

Covent Garden images from "Every Day Except Christmas". Left, above: young porter and flower display; left: the last of the flower market's woman porters. Right, above: Covent Garden café; right, below: a flower-seller walks through the market.

make imaginative documentaries. There are now signs that different circumstances are in the process of changing this mood. And so the imperative title of this programme *Look at Britain!* is not only timely, but also possibly prophetic.

Yet if it is prophetic we shall not in a few years' time be back in the thirties. And this is where the programme is most interesting. It reveals a new kind of vision. Every time an art needs to revitalise itself after a period of formalism—and prestige art is always formalist—artists will turn back to reality: but their attitude to reality, and the way they interpret it, will depend upon the particular needs of their time. That is why realism can never be defined as a style, and can never mean an acquiescent return to a previous tradition. To some extent the kind of vision revealed by this programme is the result of the artistic personality of the man who justly dominates it—Lindsay Anderson. (*Every Day Except Christmas*, sponsored by the Ford Motor Company, is his new film; *Wakefield Express*, about the news in a local paper, is one of his earlier films; while *Nice Time*, a film about Piccadilly night life, is certainly, but healthily, influenced by Anderson's *O Dreamland*.) However, Anderson was not found as a film director under a gooseberry bush. He has been formed by the contemporary world from which he now creates. And consequently it is as important to try to define Anderson's vision in relation to our time, as it is to pay tribute to him as an original artist of rare imagination.

2

There is an indication of Anderson's attitude right at the beginning of *Every Day Except Christmas*; it is affectionately dedicated to several of the Covent Garden porters whose twelve hours of work from midnight to mid-day are the subject of the film. The key word is affectionately. Personally I would never have used such a word; for me it has too many avuncular, dutiful associations. But Anderson gives it new associations and justifies his use of it by the film that follows. He approaches his heroes (there are no villains) and so also makes us approach them, on a basis of natural equality. He neither idealises them—nor does he “study” them, as Lionel Rogosin studied his unfortunates in *On The Bowery*. What he does is to muck in with them. In itself this would not of course be enough. At the most it means that he can put his characters at their ease, and so eliminate their self-consciousness when the camera is only a few feet from their faces. It is from here, however, that the poet in Anderson takes over. Having dissolved the problem of his relationship to his subject, and having decided to leave in abeyance the question of what the single purpose, the concluding argument of the film is going to be, he is intensely open-minded, open-eared, open-eyed to the ironies, the contrasts, the undertones, the warm, momentary, human revelations in the scenes through which he takes his cameraman—Walter Lassally.

Let me try to give a few examples of what I mean. The film begins just before midnight on a mushroom farm in Sussex. At midnight one hears “God Save the Queen” being played on the radio as the BBC closes down. While it is being played one sees a lorry from the farm driving towards the market along the deserted arterial road, beneath the fluorescent lights, past the suburban shops and the unglittering, silent, repetitive bijou houses. Verbally, that may sound unremarkable. But in fact the imaginative connecting power of this sequence is remarkable. It connects numerous ideas. It suggests the middle class nature of the monarchy, the present “safeness” of English life, and in contrast to that, somewhere, a memory of what a London broadcast could mean



to clandestine listeners during the war, the way those who work at night begin working rather silently, the apparent vulnerability of a sleeping city that leaves its lights on as a kind of bluff. Anderson does not of course expound these points. He simply acknowledges them as associations, as ingredients on different levels of the total meaning of the scene.

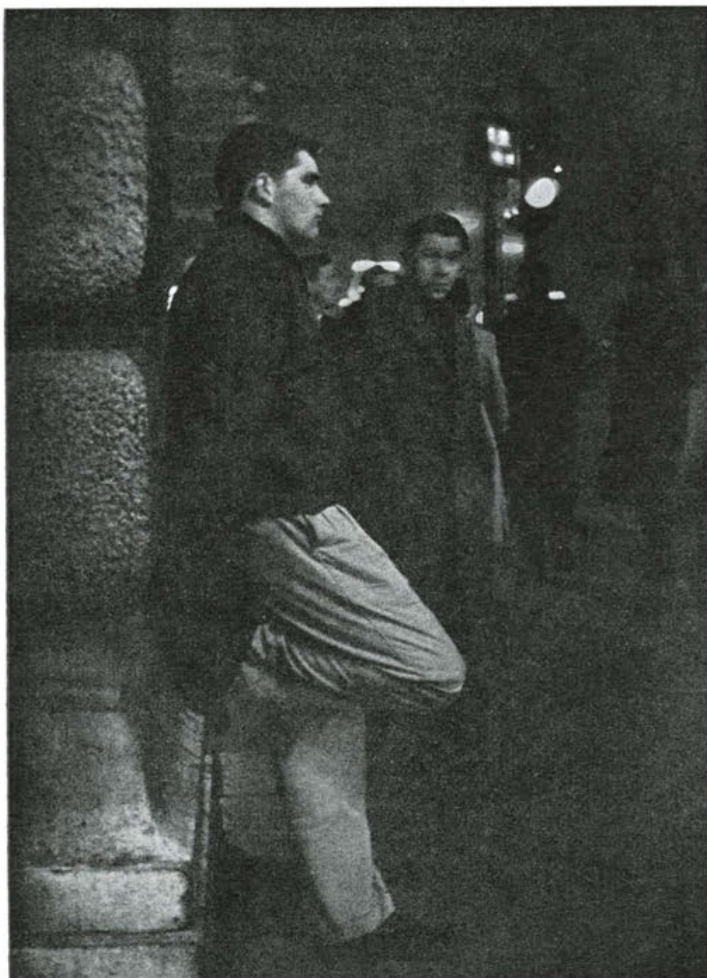
At the same time his attitude is never precious because he never allows himself to be led away from the popular basis of his theme—in this case the work and life of the porters. In the middle of the film, after a sequence in an all-night café where the porters go for a cup of tea, and in which a close-up of an unknown night-walker comes forward with all the starkness of a dossier thrown down on a police-station table, there is a cut back to the flowers now stacked in twelve-foot-high displays ready for the first buyers. To a slow movement of music the camera tracks slowly over Red Square crowds of daffodils, tulips, dahlias. The poetic value of this half-minute or so is firm enough to include, if you want to accept it, the metaphor of a mass meeting, or a reminder of Elizabethan pastoral imagery, but its basis is simple and broad: the fact that the English, so visually blind in most ways, are mad about flowers.

So far, both the examples I have given suggest a slow tempo. In fact the rhythm of the film is active. It begins slowly: cups of tea before getting down to the job. Then gradually



the echoing glass-roofed market building, which earlier was like a station just after the last train has gone, becomes full of express action, wisecracks, sentimental songs, lumbering—while 99 out of 100 still sleep. Several hours later, as the activity abates, the outside city wakes and takes over; a brass band marches its way between the loaded out-going lorries, and the porters, whose personalities we are now at home with, gratefully knock off for home.

In the film's treatment of this central theme, the strength and limits of Anderson's approach are most clearly revealed. (Is it necessary to add that no strength in art is possible without limitation?) We are never told what the average wage of a porter is; we see none of the rackets that probably exist higher up the commercial scale of the trade; the important town-planning argument for moving the market out of the centre of the city is not touched upon. In the 'thirties all this would have been the stuff of documentary. But despite this I believe that Anderson is renewing the tradition he has inherited. I have listed what he does not give us. What he does give us are images, in the literal and poetic sense of the word. There is the image of Bill unloading and stacking boxes, the camera moving with each box across the necessary two yards; this is not the hardest work but we are given the measure of it. There is the image showing the experienced way of getting a sack of potatoes up on to the shoulder. There are the old women flower sellers searching for the cheapest blossoms that with their blarney must earn them their livelihood. There is the boy with thoughts in his head heaving boxes of flowers piled high on top of it. There is the quickest way of polishing an apple. There are the big buyers, busy, shrewd and utterly



practical: the earth and what grows thereon is a commodity. There is the moment when the night ends: a new city day, accorded, not cuckooed in. Above all there is the work, the crooning, clowning, smoking, and again work, of the young porters who have restless hopes on the far side of their knowledge. Or, to take one example from *Wakefield Express*, there is the unveiling of the local war memorial and the pain in the bereaved woman's eyes as dry as the lime between the bricks of the wall she leans upon for support.

Such images have a culminating effect. They spring from and provoke, a sustained sense of sympathy. Finally, one salutes the night porters, and one is made to feel indivisible from the daily life—gay, impressive, tragic and silly—around Wakefield. Whilst it is true that our problems today are not just simply the result of a world shortage of friendliness, it is becoming increasingly clear that in an age of official genocide humanism is a positive, even a subversive force—Schweitzer must have been called many names in Whitehall. But apart from this there are two other more specific reasons why Anderson's attitude is particularly relevant to our time. First. The squalor of our society today—as distinct from the 'thirties—is revealed more sharply in the values it breeds than in plain economic facts. And this demands a far more subtle approach from the social commentator. A man's hopes become more significant than his wage packet. Second. This is a period of scepticism. And in face of this an artist like Anderson demonstrates his commitment, not to a pre-conceived generalisation, but to the complicated reality of his subject matter. He produces images that are so vibrant that they persuade us to remember and create explanations *for ourselves*—and so to begin to abandon our scepticism. His films are like daylight after formalised dreams. They are full of people who are noisier than private thoughts, more intractable than all categories.

3

The possibility of protest within such an attitude is demonstrated by *Nice Time*, the first, very promising and on the whole already successful film of Claude Goretta and Alain Tanner. The point is that the protest is not an aloof, administrative or high-minded one. It is made on behalf of the people to be seen pursuing their pleasure or their livelihood any night within 400 yards of the Eros statue. There are the patient queues waiting for the shot in the arm to be supplied by the dive-bombing war film, and there is the newspaper seller, half his face shot away in a war. The drunks trundle past two by two. The American airforce man, lost as a dog, eyes the passing women like the dog looking for its master. Coca-Cola advertises itself, and the lovers, holding hands, gaze up at the city lights. The freckled youth and the old apoplectic stare at the nude photograph as at a patriotic flag. The police make an arrest in the street whilst on the screen the hero-criminal entertains thousands. In the Amusement Arcade young men feel for their luck within the pin-table microcosms of the city outside. The last tube takes the satisfied and the disappointed home, the Circus empties, and one tart makes her last walk to the tune she cannot hear of an Irish love song.

Look indeed at Britain, for the Battle of the River Plate and the escape of the *Amethyst* have not very much to do with us today—or with Christmas Island.

"Nice Time": Piccadilly street scene.



Nine of the "Hollywood Ten", photographed at the time of their surrender to the court. Left to right: Adrian Scott, Edward Dmytryk, Samuel Ornitz, Lester Cole, Herbert Biberman, Albert Maltz, Alvah Bessie, John Howard Lawson, Ring Lardner, Jr.

BLACKLISTED

by John Cutts and Penelope Houston

THE publication last year in America of a two-volume book, *Report on Blacklisting* (No. 1 Movies; No. 2 Broadcasting), written by John Cogley for the Ford Foundation and sponsored by the Fund for the Republic, gave the most extensive account to date of the operation of the blacklist in the American film industry. *Variety* aptly headlined its review of the book, "Fund for the Republic Text—Intimate History of a Bad Dream". Even so, the Hollywood "bad dream" continues, as does the mentality of the blacklist.

This article is largely based on Cogley's book, on other published sources, and on some first-hand information from individuals now in Britain who were active in Hollywood at the time of the various hearings. The authors would like to thank them for their help and advice. The article does not pretend, however, to be a definitive record; for this, we have neither the research facilities nor the necessary space.

ANY ACCOUNT of blacklisting in Hollywood must effectively begin with the 1947 hearings by the Committee on Un-American Activities of the House of Representatives. This, though, was a beginning that also marked the end of a period, as did the Hiss trial a couple of years later. Alistair Cooke called his book on the Hiss case *A Generation on Trial*; and in a sense the Hollywood hearings represented the same trial for the same generation. This was the generation of the depression and the New Deal, the generation for whom liberalism had often shaded off into Communism because, as Cooke put it in writing of the late 'thirties, "at this most anxious juncture in the affairs of Europe and America, the fellow-traveller was never more acceptable to the administration or less suspect to the American public".

In Hollywood, political events of the 'thirties had brought the first ardent stirrings of a social conscience. Stars had boycotted silk stockings in protest against Japan, had given



Sterling Hayden testifying before the Un-American Activities Committee. Joining the Communist Party, he said, "was the stupidest, most ignorant thing I've ever done in my life".

money, secretly or openly, for strikers in California and ambulances in Spain. Actors, writers and directors had joined in forming leagues and committees, holding protest meetings against Fascism and raising money for the victims of Nazism. How much this move of protest was Communist-led and inspired cannot even be guessed at by anyone lacking first-hand knowledge. But it is certain that Hollywood's vulnerability in 1947 arose partly out of this past: what was under investigation was not simply the infiltration of Communism into the industry; it was also the conscience of Hollywood.

It was at the time suggested that the Un-American Activities Committee had two particular motives for turning its attention to Hollywood. Political naïvete made the film capital a natural target; the glamour surrounding it made it a valuable one for a committee which, it was often alleged, wanted to initiate its nation-wide researches in the full glare of world publicity.

In March, 1947, the House Committee first announced its intention of conducting "... a secret investigation of Communism in motion pictures". In September of that year, 41 subpoenas were delivered to Hollywood people, summoning them to appear before a hearing to be held in Washington in October under the chairmanship of Representative J. Parnell Thomas. The summons produced an immediate reaction. Nineteen of the witnesses banded together and made a press statement declaring that in no circumstances would they testify against themselves or each other. (This group were to become known as the "unfriendly" witnesses.) Another Hollywood group, outraged by what they regarded as an infringement of individual liberty, organised themselves under John Huston, William Wyler and Philip Dunne into the Committee for the First Amendment. They made public their belief that: "Any investigation into the political beliefs of the individual is contrary to the basic principles of our democracy. Any attempt to curb freedom of expression

[protected by the First Amendment] and to set arbitrary standards of Americanism is in itself disloyal to both the spirit and the letter of the Constitution".

Prior to the hearings this group organised radio broadcasts protesting against the House Committee's methods; placed advertisements signed by lists of Hollywood personalities in the trade press; and finally made a declaration of protest which was delivered to the Clerk of the House of Representatives by a Hollywood delegation which flew to Washington to observe the hearings. In later years, the Committee for the First Amendment has been widely listed as a Communist-front organisation, and membership of it has become a factor in determining employability. William Wyler has recently commented on this: "Of course, the Attorney General said it was a Communist-front, and apparently a front organisation is what the Attorney General decides. But this was *not* a Communist-front organisation. There may have been some Communists in the group, but then there are probably Communists in any organisation. The point is, they did not run the Committee . . . we ran the Committee and we were not Communists".

The 1947 hearings lasted two weeks. During that time, only 10 of the 19 "unfriendly" witnesses subpoenaed were called to testify. In turn, they challenged the authority of the Committee and refused to answer questions about their political affiliations. Screenwriter John Howard Lawson, first of the ten to be called, proclaimed that, "I am not on trial here; this Committee is on trial before the people of America. . . . It is absolutely beyond the power of this Committee to inquire into my association with any organisation". He also accused the Committee of intimidating witnesses and made claim that some of the "friendly" witnesses were guilty of perjury.

If the testimony of the "unfriendly" ten was on the whole brief, that of the "friendlies" was anything but. An issue of *Daily Variety* at the time noted that "... the Committee permitted friendly witnesses to read prepared statements, use notes and ramble widely in offering testimony of strong nature without supporting evidence". Highlights among this mixed assortment of evidence were the statement by Mrs. Lela Rogers, mother of Ginger Rogers, that she had forbidden her actress daughter to play the title role in Dreiser's *Sister Carrie*, which she described as "open propaganda"; and the statement made by Adolphe Menjou, who told the Committee that, "under certain circumstances a communistic director, a communistic writer or a communistic actor, even if he were under orders from the head of the studio not to inject Communism or un-Americanism or



Jack L. Warner, executive producer of Warner Brothers, giving evidence at the 1947 hearings.

subversion into pictures, could easily subvert that order . . . by a look, by an inflection, by a change of voice". Considerable time was also given to somewhat profitless discussion of the pro-Soviet films made by Hollywood during the war.

More pertinent was the testimony of a leading studio executive who had given secret testimony to the Committee's investigators before the hearings, naming several people as probable Communists. "He seemed", Cogley states, "reluctant about naming them again in public, so the secret testimony was read back to him." Asked if he stood by this he replied that he didn't actually know whether the people he had named were Communists, "but I could tell from what they were putting into scripts that they were un-American". The executive then withdrew the charges against four writers named in his original statement, declaring that he had been mistaken about them. "At least three of those cited in this manner were never named again in all the Hollywood hearings that followed. But even though their names were not included in the lists published in the House Committee's Annual Reports, they are still unable to work in Hollywood." (*Report on Blacklisting*).

For reasons that still remain obscure, the hearings were suspended soon after the testimony of the tenth "unfriendly" witness. Whatever had been proved, the hearings had produced no instances of "Communist propaganda" reaching the screen. In his closing remarks, however, Parnell Thomas advised the industry to "set about immediately to clean its own house and not wait for public opinion to force it to do so". The ten—seven writers, a producer, a director and a writer-director—had laid themselves open to a charge of Contempt of Congress by their frontal attack on the Committee's authority, and were in due course each sentenced to a year's imprisonment and a \$1,000 fine. Before sentence was passed, however, Eric Johnston, president of the Motion Picture Association of America, had told their attorneys that Hollywood would not countenance blacklisting against them.

2

In sharp contrast to this assurance was the statement—again issued by Mr. Johnston—after a two-day meeting held by the Motion Picture Association of America, the Association of Motion Picture Producers and the Society of Independent Motion Picture Producers, to determine the industry's attitude in this critical situation:

Members of the Association of Motion Picture Producers deplore the action of the ten Hollywood men who have been cited for contempt. . . . We do not desire to prejudice their legal rights, but their actions have been a disservice to their employers and have impaired their usefulness to the industry.

We will forthwith discharge or suspend without compensation those in our employ and we will not re-employ any of the ten until such time as he is acquitted or has purged himself of contempt and declares under oath that he is not a Communist.

On the broader issues of alleged subversive and disloyal elements in Hollywood, our members are likewise prepared to take positive action. We will not knowingly employ a Communist or a member of any party or group which advocates the overthrow of the Government of the United States by force or by illegal or unconstitutional methods.

In pursuing this policy, we are not going to be swayed by hysteria or intimidation from any source. We are frank to recognise that such a policy involves dangers and risks. There is the danger of hurting innocent people. There is the risk of creating an atmosphere of fear. Creative work at its best cannot be carried on in an atmosphere of fear. We will guard against this danger, this risk, this fear.

To this end we will invite the Hollywood talent guilds to work with us to eliminate any subversives; to protect the innocent; and to safeguard free speech and a free screen wherever threatened. . . .

Here was the first clear intimation of a blacklist, an intention of barring from employment not only people



1950: Dalton Trumbo and John Howard Lawson, two of the Hollywood Ten, leaving a New York station.

officially investigated but anyone known (and known was often bound to mean suspected) as a Communist. Against the background of recent years, the assurances against an "atmosphere of fear" have their tragic irony.

Hollywood's *volte-face* was widely interpreted at the time as the result of pressure from Wall Street. Bosley Crowther, writing in the *New York Times*, said that, "it should be fully realised that this action was engineered by the major New York executives, the industry's overlords, and not by the 'Hollywood producers', who form a different and subordinate group". Whether Hollywood *could* have resisted the demand for a blacklist is another question. No industry is more dependent on public opinion, and the suggestion that Hollywood was harbouring known Communists might well have produced a disastrous public reaction.

The effects of the A.M.P.P. statement were immediately felt in Hollywood. At a meeting of the Screen Writers Guild, Dore Schary announced that henceforth the industry would not hire a Communist or anyone suspected of being one. The Hollywood Ten were automatically barred from further employment. Of the nine "unfriendly" witnesses who had not been called to testify, those employed at the major studios were required to sign a statement declaring that they were not Communist Party members, and were liable to dismissal if they refused to do so.

Despite the declaration that the industry would not be "swayed by hysteria", the threat of possible blacklisting was not restricted to the "unfriendly" witnesses. "As soon as the 1947 hearings were over", John Cogley writes, "the demoralised Committee for the First Amendment began to disintegrate. Some of its members were simply weary and disillusioned. They felt they had been 'used' during the hearings, both by the House Committee and the partisans of the Hollywood Ten". Already, the blacklist was bringing with it the pervasive atmosphere of fear and suspicion.

One case, that of the actress Anne Revere, has long been regarded as an example of how blacklisting could precede official hearings. Up to the 1947 hearings, Miss Revere had been a character actress in considerable demand, and an Academy Award winner for her playing in *National Velvet*. She was amongst those who supported the Committee for

the First Amendment in its campaign. During 1947 the actress worked for 40 weeks; during 1949 for eight days; during 1950 for three weeks. When the hearings were resumed in Washington, in 1951, Miss Revere was one of the first subpoenaed to appear. She invoked the Fifth Amendment, and has not worked in the American cinema since that time.

3

There were, of course, many similar cases. And already another pattern was becoming established—that of repentance and recantation. Two of the first Hollywood personalities to clear themselves were the director Edward Dmytryk and the actor Sterling Hayden. Dmytryk had served his prison sentence as one of the Hollywood Ten. While in prison, he had issued a statement attacking the Communist Party, and after his release he engaged the services of one of the new “clearance” lawyers. He gave secret testimony to official investigators, naming people he had known during his Communist Party days; and a sympathetic article about the director and his politics at the same time appeared in the widely read *Saturday Evening Post*. This did much to clear his name, so that he was able to resume work before his public testimony during the 1951 hearings. Sterling Hayden, like Dmytryk, admitted that he was a former Communist, but had not been called to testify in 1947. When damaging rumours began to affect his career, he gave secret testimony which led to a summons to appear at the 1951 hearings. Here he repeated his testimony in public, went through the procedure of “naming names” and was duly cleared for future employment.

It is this necessity to “name names”, as part of the price of clearing one’s own, that has been the most repellent feature of the House Committee’s investigations. At the 1951 hearings, and since, directors, writers and actors have gone before the Committee to identify people they claimed to have known as Communists or ex-Communists. They have been required to turn informer as part of the ritual of contrition, and it has not been considered enough that they should “confess” merely to their own past actions. Often, the information they have been required to give has not added to the Committee’s knowledge. This is a point strongly made by Mary McCarthy in an article about the Arthur Miller case recently published in *Encounter*. “The Committee”, she writes, “was not seeking information from Mr. Miller; it was applying a loyalty test. And for Mr. Miller it was not in reality a question of betraying specific people (who had already been denounced, so that his testimony could hardly have done them further harm) but of accepting the principle of betrayal as the norm of good citizenship”. This has been the case often enough. To “name names” might be in fact the merest formality, but it is against this formal humiliation that Arthur Miller and some others have held out, resisting the demands of a “loyalty test” which leaves no place for the individual conscience. For those who have held out, the price has often been heavy. To testify but withhold information on certain points (the course taken by Arthur Miller) has been to risk a jail sentence for contempt; to invoke the Fifth Amendment (which protects the individual against self-incrimination) has been to face the blacklist.

4

The background to the 1951 hearings had been a steady fusillade of attack and comment through pressure groups, columnists, political scandal magazines and other professional guardians of public morality. In Hollywood, organisations such as the Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals remained vigorous. Then came the Korean war, and a general stiffening of public opinion. The Hiss case had done much to shake public confidence; the Cold War was at its height; the climate of

opinion was shifting, yielding to the fears and suspicions that made McCarthyism possible and McCarthy himself a national hero of the Right.

At the 1951 hearings, again held in Washington, 90 film industry people gave evidence. Among them were some who had never been Communists, but whose careers had suffered from rumours about their political affiliations. Others admitted that they had been Party members, and were now prepared to prove their loyalty by naming names. Among these, apart from Dmytryk and Sterling Hayden, were the director Frank Tuttle and the writers Budd Schulberg and Martin Berkeley. The latter, in fact, established something of a record for zealous testimony by identifying 162 persons whom he claimed to have known as Communists.

Not all the witnesses called were willing to name others as a means of “clearance” for themselves. Larry Parks, the actor, had openly admitted that he had been a Communist. “Don’t present me with the choice of being in contempt of this Committee and going to jail or forcing me to crawl (really) through the mud to be an informer, for what purpose? I don’t think this is a choice at all”, he pleaded. Lillian Hellman was another witness who refused to name others. In a letter to the Committee prior to her testimony she stated: “I am prepared to waive the privilege against self-incrimination and to tell you everything you wish to know about my views or actions, if your Committee will agree to refrain from asking me to name other people. If the Committee is unwilling to give me this assurance, I shall be forced to plead the privilege of the Fifth Amendment at the hearing”. Later, Miss Hellman invoked the Fifth Amendment.

When these hearings were over, a list of 324 names—the majority obtained from co-operative witnesses—was made public in the House Committee’s Annual Reports. Those so named found themselves barred from further employment in the cinema, and often in radio and television.

5

After the 1951 hearings, it was said in Hollywood that you could stand on the corner of Hollywood and Vine and actually hear the town sighing with relief. The worst, it was generally reckoned, had been done, the names had been named, and what more could possibly happen? What did happen was not, however, entirely unpredictable.

In the December, 1951, issue of the widely circulated *American Legion Magazine*, there appeared an article entitled “Did the Movies Clean House?” which darkly hinted that Hollywood had not gone far enough in its purge and indicated that the vast membership of the Legion would not be satisfied until certain other measures had been taken. The article named 66 persons; 17 were listed solely for having signed a brief in defence of the Hollywood Ten; others were listed because their names had appeared in an advertisement in *Variety* protesting against the 1947 hearings. Such an article could be widely influential, and Hollywood was faced with the possible threat of wide-spread picketing of cinemas stirred up by the Legion and similar organisations. In fact, organisations such as the Catholic War Veterans were prepared to make use of Hollywood’s difficulties to demonstrate their own patriotism; and the scandal magazines were simultaneously producing their own lists of names. Among pictures picketed at this time was the adaptation of Arthur Miller’s *Death of a Salesman*.

Later, a meeting was arranged between American Legion officials and representatives from the major studios. The Legion spokesmen maintained that the Legion would continue its “public information” campaign against Communism, but later suggested cooperation with the film companies, “in the hope of confining the Legion’s criticism to personnel whose studios could find no defence for them”. Accepting this suggestion, the companies invited the Legion to give them whatever information it had linking any of their employees

with Communism. Shortly afterwards, the Legion sent a formal letter to the eight major studios in which 300 people were named. The list, it was admitted, had been compiled "from scattered sources", and the letter went on to note that "we respectfully request that you check this material for any factual errors and make such reports to us as you deem proper."

John Cogley's book, in reporting these happenings, states that, according to the Legion, Hollywood misused this list. It was alleged that a studio official had made it known that the list represented a secret blacklist from the Legion to the studios. As a result, Legion posts were besieged with requests for "clearance" from agitated Hollywood people. The Legion forthwith put out a statement to the effect that the organisation was opposed to "clearing" studio personnel and deciding who should or should not be permitted to work. At the studios, meanwhile, people named in the Legion's list were asked to explain their past political associations. Those who refused were liable to dismissal; those who agreed were required to go through a procedure which became known as "writing the letter". This involved a written "explanation" addressed to a selected board of Hollywood personalities—an apology for the past and undertaking of greater "discretion" in the future. If the first letter was regarded as insufficiently thorough-going, another might have to be written. . . .

The various forms of clearance—through hearings of the House Committee, and in lesser cases through this form of semi-public "confession"—involved different degrees of personal abasement. The history of the blacklist has been a record of pressure and fear, and precisely the dangers that the A.M.P.P. statement foresaw have in fact come about. In the national revulsion against Communism, there has inevitably been little distinction between the ex-Communist, the repentant ex-Communist and the man who without being a Party member had subscribed to movements and causes later listed as subversive. To obtain "clearance", those investigated have had to admit and to disavow their political past. Those who have rejected this course, invoking the Fifth Amendment and refusing to answer questions, have inevitably presented the appearance of guilt. These, technically, are the blacklisted, as opposed to those who have only featured on a "grey list". In an article published in *Hollywood Review* in 1955, Adrian Scott, one of the Hollywood Ten, put the number of former studio employees actually blacklisted at 214. Of these, 106 were writers, 36 actors and 11 directors.

6

Hollywood's creative output over the last few years has undoubtedly suffered from this sacrifice of talent to politics. Each of us probably has his own private list of people missing from the American screen over the past five or ten years, but although it would be easy enough to "name names" in this context, we believe this would serve no useful purpose.

It can be noted, however, that there are degrees within the blacklist, and that the attitudes of the various entertainment industries are not identical. Lillian Hellman and Arthur Miller, for instance, can work in the theatre, but not in films. Larry Adler's records are still on sale in America, but when *Genevieve* was released in the U.S. his name had to be withdrawn from the credits. Several blacklisted writers are able to work, under pseudonyms, in television; others may still write for the cinema—but under false names and often at cut rates.

Finally, a number of writers and directors have taken refuge in Britain and Europe. In France, where the question of obtaining American distribution has played no very large part, several directors have been able to work under their own names. Jules Dassin's *Rififi*, immensely successful in Europe, was shown under his name in America, though admittedly in the art houses and not on a major circuit. In Britain, it is an open secret that two "B" pictures of recent years were directed by an exiled American unable to use his own name, and that several writers have been working anonymously in the



Hollywood delegation arriving in Washington to observe the 1947 hearings of the House Committee. Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall lead the marchers; behind them (left to right): Larry Adler, Richard Conte, Paul Henreid, June Havoc, Danny Kaye

British industry. For a writer or director to be deprived of his name, though, is hardly less painful than to be deprived of work, and it is a minor part of a major tragedy that British producers, however prepared they may have been to employ the exiles, have for the most part felt unable to give them credit. Even at long range, fear has done its work.

7

There are innumerable stories concerning the blacklist. One recent and public muddle is the controversy over Robert Rich, mysterious author of *The Brave One*, which won an Academy Award for the best screen story of 1956. When Rich was not to be found, the award was handed to Jesse Lasky of the Screen Writers Guild, who kindled the fires lit by the affair when he announced that there was no Robert Rich on the Guild rolls. Reporting the mystery, *Variety* quoted Frank King, producer of *The Brave One*, who identified Rich as "a boy we bought the script from in 1952 in Germany. He's a photographer-writer and wears a goatee, and we're trying to locate him to bring him to America. I've already sent five cables." Further comment about the mysterious Rich came from Dalton Trumbo, one of the Hollywood Ten, who was quoted in *Time* as refusing to affirm or deny that he was himself Rich. He also introduced the name of another blacklisted screenwriter, Michael Wilson: "He (Wilson) knew he wasn't going to get a chance at an Oscar for *Friendly Persuasion*, which would have won hands, down, so he wrote *The Brave One* to have something to show for his year's work," joked Trumbo. The reference to *Friendly Persuasion* involves further confusion stemming from the blacklist. Wilson wrote this script before being blacklisted, and when the film was released last year it carried no script credit. This did not prevent it from receiving an Academy nomination, with the proviso that the writer was "ineligible for award".

All this may suggest that, after years of practice in "getting round" the Production Code, Hollywood may be not
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Elia Kazan on the set of "Baby Doll".

The writer and motion pictures

by **ELIA KAZAN**

The script of Elia Kazan's new film, "A Face in the Crowd", will be published in America later this year. We are grateful to Mr. Kazan for permission to print this article, which will preface Budd Schulberg's script when it appears in book form.

I ARRIVED in Hollywood in 1944 to make my first motion picture, *A Tree Grows In Brooklyn*. I went from the train to the hotel and then I checked in with my producer, Louis Lighton. He was a fine man, an oldtimer, a fine producer, too. His eyesight was failing and I found him bent close over his desk peering through a very large magnifying glass. He was working on the script. He had before him Betty Smith's novel, as well as several earlier versions of the screenplay. These were being cannibalised—as they say at plane repair shops—in a search for usable parts. Laboriously and with practised craftsmanship, the producer was putting the incidents together into sequences, arranging these for climax and shaping the whole into what he always called three "acts". But Lighton knew what he was doing; he'd done it since the days of the silents.

The screenplay was credited to Tess Slesinger and Frank Davis, but in all the nine months I was in Hollywood on this project, I never met these two people. Years later in New York, I heard of Miss Slesinger's death. I still hadn't met her. Another few years passed and one night at a party, a strange man came up and introduced himself. It was Frank Davis.

I was fresh from the theatre and this separation of the writers from the director—and from their own work—came as a shock to me. I was to learn that it was regular practice.

I remember my first day at lunch in the Twentieth Century Fox commissary. Behind the closed doors of the executive dining room, I was told that Mr. Zanuck ate in state, flanked by his producers. I didn't care about them. To me, the figures of glamour were the famous directors—gods! There they were, ranged along the best wall, looking out over the enormous dining room, each at his reserved table with his favourite waitress, also reserved. The centre tables were taken by the stars. They were surrounded by their favourites and sycophants: make-up men, hairdressers, stand-ins, agents, girl or boy friends. At other prominent tables sat the big men of the back lot, the cameramen. Each had his heads of departments, his gaffers and key grips and so on: an homeric catalogue.

Only after several weeks did I notice and explore a sorry group at a remote table. Their isolation was so evident that it seemed planned. There was no mixing with this group, no table-hopping to their table. They seemed out of place. Their dress was tamer. Few had the fashionable suntan that a Beverly Hills success carries right to his grave. They laughed in an hysterical way, giddy or bitter. The writers . . .

Some of them were admitted hacks and some were unadmitted hacks. Some were top screen writers. There would be an occasional Pulitzer Prize playwright or a famous novelist who had come out to do one screen assignment. Every last one of them seemed embarrassed to be there, and the embarrassment expressed itself in a bitter wit. They specialised in long sagas about the idiocy of the motion picture business. There was a never-ending competition of appalling

anecdote. They razed everything and anybody—including themselves. A wealth of talent spent itself in mockery.

My education continued on the set of *Tree*. Since I was a total stranger to films, Lighton assigned me one of Hollywood's best cameramen, Leon Shamroy. I was to stage the scenes "as if they were happening in life" and Leon would decide how to photograph them. He would get on to film various angles that could subsequently be cut together to make an effective cinematic narration. Leon was a new experience to me. As I say, I'd come from Broadway where the writer was god and his lines were sacred by contract. Now I'm sure that Leon read the script, or most of it, before he started on the picture, but I know he didn't look at the day's scenes before coming to work each morning. This wasn't negligence: it was policy. There was a superstition that to look at the literary foliage would blur one's sense of the essential action. When I came on the set in the morning, he was usually there, a victim of sleep (too much or too little) and ready for the ministrations of the set porter. In those halcyon days, each set had its porter. In a daily ritual, Leon was presented with coffee—a "Danish"—*The Hollywood Daily Variety*—*The Hollywood Reporter*. While he read, I would earnestly rehearse the actors. In time, Leon would lower his *Reporter* and ask, "Well, what's the garbage for today?" The garbage was the dialogue. If he had a criticism, it was always the same one, "What do you need all those words for?" On his benign days, he didn't say garbage. He said, "the nonsense".

The writers were in a humiliating position. The filmmakers insisted on referring to themselves as an industry. An industry aspires to efficiency. They were supplying fifty-odd pictures per major studio per year to the market. They tried to supervise the manufacture of scripts by methods that worked splendidly in the automobile and heavy appliance industries. The system, with variations, went something like this:

An "original property" (a novel, a play, a "story idea") was bought outright. By this act, a studio acquired material and at the same time got rid of a potential troublemaker, the "original" author. (One of the tales that the writers told was about a studio head who bought a highly regarded bestseller. He strutted into his dining room and boasted, "I just bought a great story—but I think I can lick it!") The next step was an executive conference about the property and, usually, the casting of the stars. The "original property" was then turned over to a "construction man". His job was, precisely, to "lick the story". In other words, he was to bring the material into digestible shape and length, twist it to fit the stars and to eliminate unacceptable elements. These last included: elements banned by the Code; elements which might offend any section of the world audience; unentertaining elements such as unhappy endings or messages ("Leave them to Western Union!"). There was a word that governed what went out: the word "offbeat". This covered anything, really, that hadn't been done before, that hadn't been, as the marketing experts say, pre-tested. The "construction man", to put it simply, was supposed to lay down the outline of a hit. (For some reason, at this time, Middle-Europeans were highly regarded for this job. Their knowledge of our language and country was slight



Peggy Ann Garner and Ted Donaldson in "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn", Elia Kazan's first film.

but they were hell on structure and continuity.) Since the "construction man" was a specialist, the time came when his usefulness ended. Then, through his agent, he was invited to step out. A "dialogue man" was brought in. (The verb "to dialogue" was added to the writers' glossary of Hollywood words.) After the man who dialogued it, there frequently followed a "polish man". The script was getting close. (They hoped.) There was a good chance that an "additional dialogue man" would spend a few weeks on the job. His instructions might be very simple, as, "Put thirty laughs in it".

What was wrong with hiring a specialist in each field? It should have been efficient.

Trouble was, the final shooting script was so often preposterous. Characters went out of character. Plot threads got snarled. Climaxes made no sense, because the preparation for them had got lost somewhere on the assembly line. If it was a "B" picture, they usually shot it anyway. But if it was a "big" picture, the producer, like Lighton, would find himself late at night compiling a *last* final shooting script out of bits and pieces of all the previous versions. More often, it was the director who did this. Or sometimes, a brand new writer was called in. The Screen Writers Guild put in a lot of time ruling on which writers were entitled to what screen credit for a picture that none of them could altogether recognise.

2

It was all pretty confusing, as I said, to a director fresh from the theatre. The theatre was Eugene O'Neill and Sidney Howard and Robert Sherwood and S. N. Behrman and Thornton Wilder and Clifford Odets and twenty others. The least newest greenest playwright shared the aura and the rights that the giants had earned. The rest of us—actors, directors and so on—knew that our function was to bring to life the plays they wrote.

But, I was told, pictures are different . . . The difference comes from the power of the camera. Film is a pictorial medium. The strip of celluloid ought to tell the story with the sound track silent. There are crucial artistic choices that can't possibly be anticipated in a script. They have to be made hour by hour on the set and in the cutting room. A director stages plays: he *makes* pictures.

This was all true and I must say that I took to it rather readily. Since I happened to be one, I was disinclined to

"A Face in the Crowd": Andy Griffith and Patricia Neal.

quarrel with a line of reasoning which thrust power and pre-eminence upon the directors.

I was a good while longer learning certain other facts about picturemaking. They are equally important. I learned them tripping up on inadequate scripts—including some that I vigorously helped to shape. I can state them with painful brevity:

There can't be a fine picture without a fine script.

There can't be a fine script without a first-class writer.

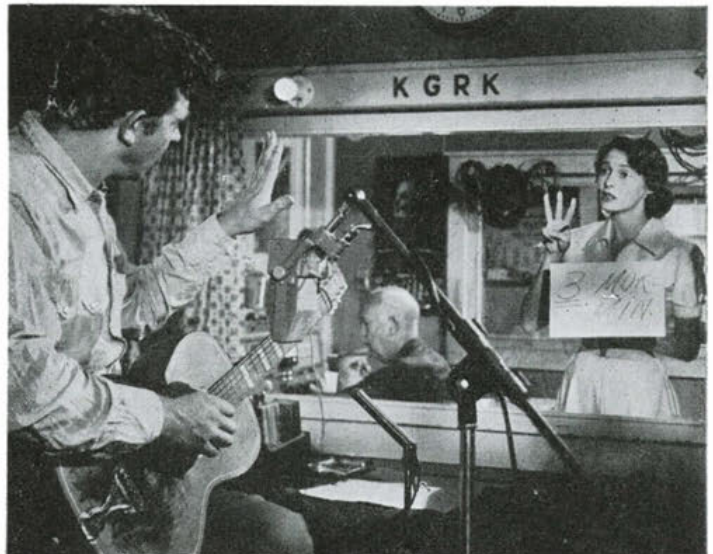
A first-class writer won't do first-class work unless he feels that the picture is *his*.

I doubt if the writer's place in pictures will—or should—ever be exactly the same as in the theatre, but I've been thinking a lot lately about just what happened in the theatre. It's relevant and salutary.

Take 1900-1920. The theatre flourished all over the country. It had no competition. The box office boomed. The top original fare it had to offer was *The Girl of the Golden West*. Its bow to culture was fusty productions of Shakespeare. Either way, the plays were treated as showcases for stars. The business was in the hands of the managers and the actor-managers. The writers were nowhere. They were hacks who turned out new vehicles each season, to order. A playwright had about as little pride in his work, as little recognition for it, as little freedom, as a screen writer in Hollywood in the palmy days. And his output was, to put it charitably, not any better . . . Came the moving pictures. At first, they were written off as a fad. Then they began to compete for audiences and they grew until they threatened to take over. The theatre had to be better or go under . . . It got better. It got so spectacularly better so fast that in 1920-30, you wouldn't have recognised it. Perhaps it was an accident that Eugene O'Neill appeared at that moment—but it was no accident that in that moment of strange competition, the theatre made room for him. Because it was disrupted and hard-pressed, it made room for his experiments, his unheard-of subjects, his passion, his power. There was room for him to grow to his full stature. And there was freedom for the talents that came after his. For the first time, American writers turned to the theatre with anticipation and seriousness, knowing it could use the best they could give.

3

Well, now it's 1957 and television is the "industry". It's a giant—and a growing giant. It's fated to be much bigger than pictures ever were. Even now, it's overwhelming. We've all seen that. During the elections, during the World Series, during political crises, homes from coast to coast are





"A Face in the Crowd": Andy Griffith as the Country boy who becomes a television star and national hero.

tied to a few networks on the same cable, on the same timetable. Whether it's good or bad or both, one thing is certain: it's here.

Television is the subject of *A Face in the Crowd*, the second picture that Budd Schulberg and I have made together. It's also the force that's shaken up the whole picture business. It's our turn now. We in pictures have got to be better or go under.

When TV appeared, the motion picture people put up a struggle. They didn't give up easily. First, they pretended that it wasn't there. Then they tried to combat it with every conceivable technical novelty. They tried big screens in all sorts of ratios of width to height. They tried the third dimension, with and without goggles. They tried multiple sound sources and bigger budgets. As I write, the novelty is long, long, long pictures. They tried just about everything except the real novelty: three dimensional material, new and better stories.

There are signs that they are being forced to that . . . It was hard to miss the meaning of the recent Academy Awards. In 1954, *From Here To Eternity*; 1955, *On the Waterfront*; 1956, *Marty*. Of these, only the first came from a major studio. All three used ordinary old-fashioned screens. All three were shot in black and white. And different as they were, each of them was plainly, undeniably, "offbeat". People simply didn't care what size the screen was. They went to see those pictures because they had life in them.

The writers rejoiced in a recognition that went beyond

their Awards; and, notice, in each case, the writer carried through from start to finish, working actively with the director. James Jones had written a hot novel out of his war experience. Daniel Taradash made the material his own, turned it into a fine screenplay and worked closely with Fred Zinnemann, the director. Budd Schulberg did an original screenplay out of long research and conviction and feeling, consulting with me often as he wrote, and standing by during much of the shooting. Paddy Chayevsky expanded his own television sketch into a picture and was consulted by Delbert Mann as it was being shot.

To get back to the picturemakers, they're in trouble. The box-office barometer dipped down, recovered, dropped again. Picture houses are closing, going dark. There is a rumour that one of the big studio lots is to be sold for a real estate development. In such moments of confusion and panic, executive imaginations make unaccustomed flights. It has begun to occur to them that the writer—that eccentric, ornery, odd, unreliable, unreconstructed, independent fellow—is the only one who can give them real novelty.

The first sign that the old order was changing came in an odd but characteristic way: there was a certain loosening of the industry's self-imposed censorship Code. There were departures from the frantic and crippling rule that *you must please everybody, you can't offend anybody*. An older law was operating at the box-office: if you try to please everybody, you don't please anybody.

At the same time, the unwritten taboos began to be relaxed.

The superstition about "offbeat" material took a new turn. There seemed to be some mysterious plus in the "offbeat". Warily, story departments were instructed to look for subjects with this peculiar quality.

So now the writers—the fellows who used to sit in that caustic clump in the farthest corner of the studio commissary—are being brought forward. A number of them have been moved "up" to non-writing jobs. They have been made producers and/or directors. Since it would seem obvious that writers are needed as writers, this may sound as inscrutably silly as other Hollywood behaviour I've described—but it is at least a fumbling recognition that writers "have something" and that whatever it is, it's needed now. More reasonably, books and other stories that used to be thought unsuitable for pictures are being bought and tried. In a surprising number of cases, the "original author" is being asked to make his own screen version. Above all, writers are being invited, cajoled and very well paid to write original and serious pictures. This last is the big step and the big hope.

Another sign of change is the growing number of small independent units being financed by the big studios and operating with a freedom that was unimaginable ten years ago. The mood is, "Let them try . . ."

I'm one of the ones who's trying. I've formed my own company, Newtown Productions. I like being my own boss. I make my own pictures the way I want to make them. Also, I make my own mistakes. One of the things I've done, against all business advice, is to upset the traditional balance and make the writer more important than the stars. I don't think it's a mistake.

You see, I think we have a wonderful chance right now. The breakdown of the old standardised picturemaking has made room for creative people. It is a boon to anyone who has something personal and strong to say. For art is nothing if it is not personal. It can't be homogenised. By its nature, it must disturb, stir up, enlighten and "offend".

I'd like to make one last point about the writers because it's important. To go back to the Academy Award winners, Dan Taradash and Budd Schulberg and Paddy Chayevsky, notice that they don't sneer at pictures. They don't think that screenwriting is beneath them or that it's somehow an inferior form. The first time I met Budd, he had published three important and successful novels but he said to me, "God, I'd like to write a really good picture some day." I

heard Paddy use almost the same words back in 1951 when he was a young TV writer. They have both done it. I think Budd has done it again.

4

After *Waterfront*, Budd and I decided to make another film, to be based on his short story, *Your Arkansas Traveler*. The impulse came partly from the story itself but even more from a series of conversations we had about—well, about everything. About TV—its power—hypnotic, potentially most dangerous and still at times, brilliantly effective for good. We talked of how much more powerful Huey Long would have been if he had had TV at his disposal. We talked about the famous Nixon broadcast, when the question of his financial backers turned somehow into a defence of his children's dog. We talked of the harm that Senator McCarthy did his own cause when he whispered direly to his young assistant in front of the cameras. We talked about the way public figures are now coached for their broadcasts and how the medium can make a performer or a politician overnight—or break a man that fast, too.

As we discussed the story, we began to watch programmes much more than either of us had before. Every once in a while, something brilliant comes out of the box, like the reportage called *The First World War*, the Basilio-Saxton fight, Ed Murrow's interview with Colonel Nasser, Yogi Berra leaping into Don Larsen's arms, Mary Martin and Ethel Merman. But TV, having won first place in the entertainment field, has the burdens of the victor. It has become the staple. It can't "offend". It's standard brand. And no matter how deeply you're drawn into what they're showing you, one of those fellows has got to come out and tell you with horrifying cheerfulness about soup or soap or cigarettes.

We took cognisance of the new synthetic folksiness that saturated certain programmes and the excursions into political waters by these "I-don't-know-anything-but-I-know-what-I-think" guys. We wondered about the power of television to sell synthetic personalities as it sells the soup and the soap.

We went to Madison Avenue like explorers going into a strange country. We talked with performers and account executives and writers. We had interviews with big shots and lunch with medium-sized shots and drinks with little shots. We are indebted to all of them—not least for permission to sit in on a conference about the photographing of a catsup bottle.

We listened and we read and we made notes and we compared notes and always we discussed what we had seen. Out of these conversations and the mutual desire to say something about this giant of our times, came the shape of our picture.

Budd was the original source and, perhaps, the conscience. I was at his call and often at his side in the months he was writing it. He was at my side when my active work began. He was there during the casting and all the other preparation. We went to Piggott, Arkansas, together and decided that was the place to shoot the country scenes. He came there on location and, also, to Memphis. He has been on the set every day in New York and made essential contributions. I never worked more closely with an author in the theatre.

And as for the lunch hour, we ate together.



Studio democracy: Elia Kazan in the canteen.



"Celui Qui Doit Mourir": Jules Dassin's film, in black-and-white CinemaScope, is a story of conflict in a Greek village. Pierre Vanneck (right) as the shepherd chosen to play Christ in the village Passion Play.

Cannes 1957

LINDSAY ANDERSON

To give more than a taste of Cannes this year—to discuss all its important pictures in full and really consider their implications—would take a great deal more space than I have here. I must content myself with a few notes: and if these contain a large number of unfamiliar names, this is because Cannes 1957 was most notably a youthful festival, revealing a world cinema full of talent and promise. And this is something more exciting even than mature achievement.

It was also a festival that proved—encouragingly—how many people working in this enormously difficult medium are managing to defeat pressures and restrictions, and to produce work which genuinely reflects the spirit and struggle of our world. The publicity-face of Cannes, as is inevitable, emphasised the escapist, "Arabian Nights" aspect of the cinema. But on the screen, the images were for the most part sombre and troubled. Many critics groaned for comedy; but the violence of the times makes tranquil and diverting art difficult. The scars of wars still show; social and political conflicts threaten; faith has to be searched for, and fought for. This is honesty, not defeatism. To accuse contemporary film-makers of morbidity, to insist that they should be making us laugh, is to invite hypocrisy. What matters is the spirit with which reality is confronted. There is such a thing as morbid defeatism of course (*The Last Laugh*, etc.); but this was far from being the general impression at Cannes, in spite of all the deaths and disasters on the screen. What film makers are saying out in the world today—even if not yet on our own island—is "il faut tenter de vivre".

I got this impression most strongly from the two Polish films shown, both the work of a new, outstandingly talented young director, Andrej Wajda. *A Generation* (French title, *Une Fille a Parlé*) was made three years ago, a story of partisan resistance to the Germans during the war, and of a young worker's awakening to social conscience—in this context Communism. Summarised barely, the theme is not new; and its makers now regret the imposed concentration on the Communist element in the resistance, to the exclusion of the Nationalist contribution. But, as always with such subjects, it is the warmth and belief of the handling that impresses, the dedicated sincerity of the playing, and the whole poetic spirit of the picture. This is not a film about Communism essentially

(any more than *The Grapes of Wrath* is a film about the New Deal); it is a film about young Poland, inspired by a generous, democratic idealism. Its affirmation is never facile; but the romanticism is gallant, not despairing—the boy who jumps to death rather than be caught or killed by the Germans, raising his hand before he goes, in a last, fine salute to life.

Kanal, Wajda's second picture, salutes life too, for all the grimness of its subject—the tragic end of the Warsaw Rising in 1944. Driven into the city sewers, like thousands of others, a little detachment perishes in twos and threes, unable to escape, or crawling into daylight only to find themselves face to face with a German firing squad. This is an enormously impressive film, though with touches of theatricality in places (hints even of Expressionism) that I am not sure go with the terrible realities of the subject. But *Kanal* is to be seen more than once: it is an achievement of which the Polish Cinema can be proud.

The Germans certainly took a bashing in many of the films, and in the East and West German entries themselves there was food for much (disturbing) thought. *Rose Bernd*, with its sloppy emotionalism, its heavy self-pity, and its fagged-out romanticism, could easily have been a production of the Nazi cinema: it was depressing to find this creaking vehicle for the talents of Maria Schell directed by the man who nine years ago made *The Murderers are Amongst Us*—Wolfgang Staudte. East Germany, on the other hand, distinguished itself by presenting a film artistically amongst the best Defa have produced, and socially of great and salutary interest. *Duped Till Doomsday* is the work of another new director, Kurt Jung-Alsen, who reveals himself as a powerful and disciplined stylist—there is something here of the dry, concentrated poetic force you get from Bresson or Dreyer. His film is a brief, concise story of three German soldiers serving in an infantry detachment on the Russian border just before and after the outbreak of war in 1939. Accidentally they are responsible for the death of their Colonel's daughter: the suspense—and the moral—of the film is engendered by their different reactions to what they have done, and their efforts to evade responsibility for it. Never overtly, but with greater and greater implicit force, the anecdote expands into

(Continued on page 28)

Discoveries at C A N N E S

Cannes 1957 was remarkable for the number of new talents it revealed throughout the world—new at least to the international scene. Three of the most striking of these came from countries as yet hardly reckoned major powers in the cinema—Poland, the Argentine and East Germany. The films will be shown in London in the autumn, during the Festival of International Cinema which will take place at the new National Film Theatre.



Top: Andrej Wajda (left), the 31-year old director of "Kanal", with his scenarist, Jerzy Stawinski.

Above: Tadeusz Janczar, one of the leading young actors in the Polish theatre. He played in Wajda's first picture, "A Generation", as well as in "Kanal".



"Kanal": A story of the Warsaw Rising in 1944. A Polish soldier emerges from the sewers, to find himself face to face with a German firing squad.





Above: Leopoldo Torre Nilsson, director of "The House of the Angel", with Beatriz Guido, author of the book and the scenario. Son of a leading Argentinian film director, Nilsson has so far made five pictures.

►
"The House of the Angel": Adolescence amongst the Argentinian upper-bourgeoisie in the 'twenties.



Above: Kurt Jung-Alsen comes from the theatre. His work attracted the attention of Defa, for whom he first directed two comedies. "Duped Till Doomsday" is his first dramatic subject.

►
"Duped Till Doomsday": The three German soldiers who have been accidentally responsible for the death of their colonel's daughter.



allegory. This is a dark, justly cruel film, surely one of the most telling indictments we have seen of the Nazi mentality, and of its willing and unwilling supporters.

The third new director to make his mark at Cannes comes from the Argentine. Torre Nielsson's *The House of the Angel* (from a novel by Beatriz Guido) is a subtle and delicate study of adolescence, directed with a style which occasionally verges on the precious, but generally achieves remarkable qualities of observation and nuance. Brought up in an atmosphere of stifling puritanism, heavily charged with hell-fire religion, its sixteen-year old heroine is the victim of a disastrous, unpremeditated seduction by a man older and more experienced than herself. The experience marks both of them for life. Perhaps the feminine viewpoint of the story falsifies the man's reaction to the episode—and this may account for a lack of resolution at the end of the film; but generally the penetration is acute, the re-creation of period (the film is set in the twenties) is brilliant, and the oppressive social background is most illuminatingly presented.

The North American contribution was without interest, except for the excellent *Bachelor Party*, which is discussed elsewhere in this issue. (But I must record at least my disappointment with *Funny Face*, which, in common with many critics at Cannes, I found most distasteful in its slick, smug and superficial anti-intelligent attitude. Fashionable in the worst sense.) The British films *High Tide at Noon* and *Yangtze Incident* made little impression; and indeed it was difficult to defend the latter from the frequent charge of political irresponsibility, quite apart from its other demerits.

The French entry, on the other hand, was of a much higher standard than in recent years. Bresson's fine *Un Condamné à Mort s'est Echappé* is discussed elsewhere, and needs no further commendation from me; and Jules Dassin's *Celui Qui Doit Mourir* is also a work of great courage and outstanding interest. Adapted from Kazantzaki's novel *Christ Recrucified*, this is a film which defies adequate notice in a few words: a story of religious and social conflict in a Greek village dominated by Turkish militia and a reactionary Orthodox priest, its gesture is one of compassion and anger. There comes a time, it says, when good men must fight together for what they believe. One's response to the film will depend to some extent on one's response to this attitude; for there is no doubt that Dassin's somewhat theatrical approach to the subject, and the uneven playing of his French cast, stop him short of complete success. His desire to transcend melodrama is obviously sincere; yet his instinct for it constantly betrays him. This is probably his chief problem now as an artist.

Further comments must necessarily be brief. The two Russian films were both interesting and of high quality. *The Forty-First*, (another début, by Grigori Tchoukhrai) is an attractively romantic story: the abortive love affair of a girl sniper with the Red forces and a White Russian officer. Remarkable for its sympathetic—at times humorous—view and the promising fairness of its character-



"The Seventh Seal": the knight challenges Death to a chess game.

isation. Playing fresh and charming (as in most Russian pictures); colour striking; direction most capable, if rather on the academic side. Kozintsev's *Don Quixote* (in CinemaScope) is a frankly episodic version, stressing the radical-social side of the original, though without detriment to its profound tragi-comedy. The staging of this is remarkable, particularly the cold, satirically formalised court scenes; and Cherkassov is (of course) a superb Don Quixote. Nevertheless, this film lacks something: with all its fine qualities, it does not impose itself quite strongly enough.

The Japanese entry was disappointing. *People of the Rice Fields* was a confused mixture of drama and semi-documentary by a director (Tadashi Imai) plainly more gifted for narrative than for the poetic. *The Roof of Japan* was a decent enough long-documentary: but without style. Far better use of background was made by a group of films produced with resources far more slender. Particularly *Rekava (The Line of Destiny)*, a first venture by Ceylon on to the international scene, and a very successful one. A simple story of village life, filmed with a winning sensitivity and lyrical feeling by another new director, Lester Peries: performed by amateurs (very well), casual in construction, leisurely in pace, photography continually seductive—above all a genuine and refreshing picture. Good use of background was also made in the Finnish *Harvest Month* (Matti Kassila), a film of very different genre: literary, dramatic and sophisticated. The action passes in a small country town one August afternoon and night, and follows an assorted group of characters through their loves and quarrels, to the death of one, an alcoholic. An over-literary, over-dialogued film perhaps, but with fascinating qualities of atmosphere, with a real and quite individual sense of the poetic.

Finally a word about one of the most remarkable films of the festival—one that created disagreement among critics, but which may well turn out to have been the best film shown at Cannes this year. Ingmar Bergman's *The Seventh Seal* is an extraordinary, Gothic creation, a 15th century fable which has all the surprise and suggestiveness of legend, and a quite marvellous feeling of period—mediaeval lyricism and cruelty, sense of dread and sense of wonder all commingled. Returning from a Crusade, a knight meets Death on the sea-shore. But he doubts: he is not ready to die: he challenges Death to a game of chess. He cannot win, but he holds his enemy off for a time as he journeys on towards home with his sceptical, stoical servant. They fall in with other travellers: there is a plague, a girl is burned as a witch, they are joined by a strolling player (who sees visions) and his wife and child. These innocents escape; but the rest of the company must obey their destiny, and Death takes them off up the skyline in the end, a macabre, silhouetted line of dancers. The symbolism is rich and powerful, but the film never loses its quality of story—a Gothic tale (I was reminded of Baroness Blixen). The style, too, has the right, uncompromising simplicity: it is highly sophisticated, of course, but never bizarre. Bergman is really somebody.



Nikolai Cherkassov in the Russian "Don Quixote".

Asian Film Festival

BY MARIE SETON

IN 1954—at a time when the Japanese cinema alone of Asian production had won world acclaim—Japan inaugurated the first Film Festival in Asia. The Fourth Festival was held in Tokyo this year, from May 20 to May 25; and it is generally agreed among the Asian participants that the Festival has done much not only to stimulate production in numerous countries, but to encourage much higher standards of technical proficiency. There have been notable advances, for example, in the Philippines since *Ghengis Khan* was seen here; and this year four awards were given to Philippine films, including the prize for Best Direction, which went to *Badjao*.

There were in all forty-two entries, feature and documentary, from eight competing countries: Japan, The People's Republic of China, Korea, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaya, the Philippines and Thailand. India and Viet Nam both submitted guest entries. India is expected to join the Asian Federation of Motion Picture Producers next year. Among the guest observers were two from Burma; I was invited as an observer from England.

Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaya were especially well represented in the Festival and between them took the award for the Best Actress (the exquisite Lin Dai of Hong Kong), the award for the Best Actor (P. Ramlee of Malaya), and awards for Best Photography in a non-dramatic film and Best Planning of a Documentary, both of which went to the Malayan Film Unit. Apart from these, I was sorry that no award went to the Indonesian colour documentary, *A House, A Wife, A Singing Bird*, a film notable for its humanistic handling of a social problem.

Two of the most popular entries were comedies: one from Korea and one from Japan. The Korean *Wedding Day*, an engaging character comedy, skilfully and delightfully acted, took the award for the Best Comedy. From Japan, *Otorijo no Hanayome* (*The Lord Takes a Bride*) is a satire of a kind which we have not yet seen in Britain.



The Philippines: "Badjao".

Inevitably Japan took the major awards of the Festival. The major prize—the Golden Harvest Award—went to the Daiei Motion Picture Company, producers of *Rashomon*, for their tragic love story of feudal Japan, *Shujaki-mon* (*Love of a Princess*), while the Best Documentary award went to Zansuke Nishio's *Korobe Gorge*. This is concerned with the building of a dam in the snow-bound region, and it is evident that the director and the cameraman understand and know the whole area intimately. Often the superb camera compositions recall traditional Japanese painting.

Shujaki-mon, although its camerawork and colour are outstanding, lacks for me the dynamic force of *Rashomon* or *Gate of Hell*. Nevertheless, I found it interesting, as the first Japanese period film I have seen in which none of the performances are based on the traditional styles of the Kabuki theatre.

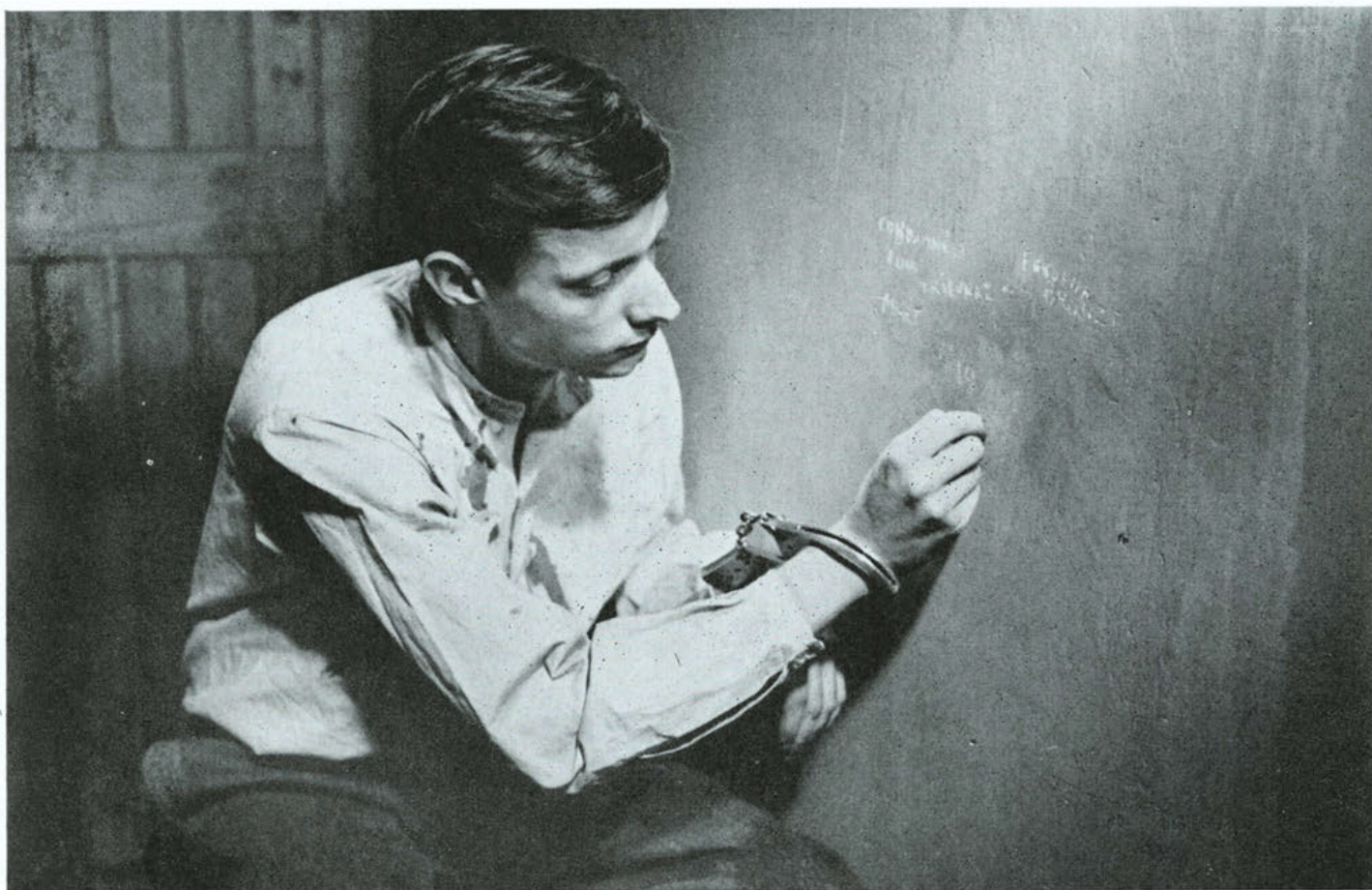
When I visited the Shochiku Studios, whose interests include the presentation of the Kabuki drama, I was told that there is in fact no cinematic theory behind the use of Kabuki styles; it is simply an accepted convention of Japanese period films. Nor, so far as I could learn, have any Japanese directors come to the cinema from the Kabuki theatre. This absence of any deliberate derivation seems all the more interesting considering that Eisenstein's theories of editing and his use of large and stylised close-ups were largely influenced by his studies of Kabuki technique.

At the Shochiku Studios I saw much which explains the technical excellence of so many of the best Japanese films. Financial resources are invested in the best possible equipment—much of which is now being manufactured and developed in Japan itself—rather than in spectacular buildings (the offices are the most modest that could be imagined). On all the sets I visited I was struck by the minute and sensitive care afforded to such matters as art direction and costume.

Shochiku produces a hundred pictures a year; and the average shooting schedules range from five weeks to ten for a very elaborate production. This company constitutes an entire industry within the industry, being entirely self-sufficient save for colour processing. The studio employs eight hundred people, and includes a factory which produces spare parts for imported equipment.

The unostentatious conduct of Japanese film moguls, who now stand first in world production, with an output of 514 films this year, is characteristic of the attitude of the Asian film-makers who came to Tokyo. None of them—producers, directors or stars—scrambled to capture the limelight, though few Festivals can have gathered together such a glamorous gathering. And the glamour was all the more attractive for the unselfconscious animation of all the participants.

Korean comedy: "Wedding Day".



"Un Condamné à Mort": François Leterrier.

Working with Bresson

ROLAND MONOD

ONE evening in April, 1956, a clergyman friend telephoned to say that Robert Bresson would like to see me. The following month Bresson was to start shooting his fourth film, provisionally called *Un Condamné à Mort s'est Echappé*. It was under this title that *Le Figaro Littéraire* had published, in November, 1954, Commandant Devigny's account of his amazing escape from Fort Montluc, in Lyons, on an August night in 1943, when, as a young lieutenant imprisoned by the Gestapo, he had just learned that he had been sentenced to death.

Developing the methods of his *Journal d'un Curé de Campagne*, Bresson intended to use only non-professional players in his film. He had already found a young philosophy graduate who had recently completed his military service, and whose age (27) and rank were just those of the hero of 1943. There was also, Bresson asserted, some correspondence in character between him and Devigny. An elderly man of letters—a Belgian in his seventies, white-haired and with few surviving illusions—was the future M. Blanchet, the sceptical but good man who occupies the next cell to Fontaine. (This was the name given in the film to Devigny.) A designer and window-dresser was to play Hébrard, the artist and prison-philosopher of Montluc; and one of Cousteau's frogmen

would be Orsini, the prisoner from whose luckless escape attempt Fontaine is able to learn. Jost, the young cell-mate whom Fontaine has at the last moment to take with him, was a boy from the orphanage at Auteuil. (A little while later, at the St. Maurice Studio, the boy was congratulated on his seventeenth birthday. He broke down: this was the first time anyone had ever noticed his birthday.) Finally, some German students from the Cité Universitaire had agreed to play the parts of the Gestapo officers and warders.

One part remained to be filled: that of Roland de Pury, who is still a pastor at Lyons. He was imprisoned at Montluc partly because he had been involved in the escape of a Resistance fighter, partly also to prevent him delivering from his pulpit thundering sermons against the Occupiers. In prison, de Pury had quickly formed a bond of trust and secret friendship with Devigny. After various fruitless searches, Bresson offered this part to a minister of the Church of the Annunciation. Tied by his parish duties, he declined it, although (Bresson sensed) with some regret. The director therefore returned to the attack, employing all his fiendish ingenuity and an obstinacy tempered by a characteristic humour. How, he asked, could a pastor convinced of his evangelical mission reject this chance to further it in a world

—the cinema—which, almost by definition, was normally closed to him, but which was for once—miraculously—prepared to open its doors and arms . . . ? The pastor undoubtedly saw the ingenuity and charm of this appeal. He still refused the part; but he told Bresson about me.

Coming from an established Protestant family, I had for a time studied theology. Having subsequently become a journalist, I was at that time working as dramatic critic on a new evening paper.

2

At our first meeting, Bresson explained that he wanted some external sign to signify my new state of pastor. He thought of pinning on my coat lapel (a blue jacket, not black; and without the clerical collar of the Catholic church, so that audiences would not immediately realise my status) one of those little silver crosses worn by members of the Federation of Christian Student Associations, which many clergy continue to wear after they leave college. He was uncertain, however, of the size of these crosses, and was afraid that on the screen they might look ostentatious. "It's all right", I assured him, "they measure four millimetres". And Bresson, in a sudden access of scruple, exactitude and paradox, let fall, "I'm afraid that might be a bit too large". He finished, though, by having a cross specially made, measuring a good fifteen millimetres!

Bresson told me that since the pastor's strength lay in the intensity of his inner life, the more I turned in upon myself, the less I seemed outwardly to give, the more this depth of being would impose its strength and authority on the screen. Finally he gave me—as he did all his actors—a page of dialogue from *Les Anges du Péché*, a scene between two nuns, which I was to prepare for my screen test:

—*Je ne sais pas de devinette mais je sais une énigme. Vaut-il mieux avoir de la poussière sur ses meubles ou sur son âme?*

—*Pourquoi cette question?*

—*Mère Saint-Jean prétend qu'un peu de poussière sur un meuble choque Dieu. Moi je prétends qu'un peu de poussière sur une âme est pour lui une offense plus grande.*

—*Qu'appellez-vous poussière sur une âme?*

—*Je n'ai que le choix: l'hypocrisie par exemple . . .*

"Forget about tone and meaning", Bresson told me. "Don't think about what you're saying; just speak the words automatically. When someone talks, he isn't thinking about the words he uses, or even about what he wants to say. Only concerned with what he is saying, he just lets the words come out, simply and directly. When you are reading, your eye just strings together black words on white paper, set out quite neutrally on the page. It's only *after* you have read the words that you begin to dress up the simple sense of the phrases with intonation and meaning—that you interpret them. The film actor should content himself with *saying* his lines. He should not allow himself to show that he already understands them. Play nothing, explain nothing. In life, don't words often lead to thought . . . ? A text should be spoken as Dinu Lipatti plays Bach. His wonderful technique simply releases the notes; understanding and emotion come later . . ."

3

Later on, I was to see that there are various ways of not interpreting a text. And the author (Bresson, as with *Journal d'un Curé*, wrote the script himself) would sit there before each new set-up, holding his head in his hands, and repeating the lines over to himself, trying to arrive at the quality of directness and simplicity that he would then impose on us. He would go over and over the lines to get the absolute starkness and austerity he wanted us to reproduce, the *faux-*

naturel Bresson manner which he evolved and left us to copy as well as we were able. This is one of the most striking things about watching Bresson at work. He knows exactly and immediately what he does not want; but he discovers only very gradually what he does want, working it out through many feet of film, through the very clumsiness with which his actors interpret his intentions. This is why he was eventually to shoot 180,000 feet of film to produce the 8,000 finally used . . .

As far as sound is concerned, Bresson's latest film uses noise rather than dialogue. In the shut-in world of a prison, it is objects which strike you most. The object stays: the man who uses it is only there for the time being. When Fontaine first breathes the fresh air of freedom on the roof of Montluc, and the shell of this dead world is pierced, we enter a new world, ruled by noise. The very sounds testify that men are alive.

The dialogue directly recorded at the studio did not, by Bresson's standards, adequately establish this contrast between the worlds of silence and sound. He found its tone still too human, too anecdotal. We had to go back and re-record our lines in a sound studio. There, phrase by phrase, word by word almost, we spoke our lines after their author—ten, twenty, thirty times over, trying to match as exactly as possible the intonations, the rhythm, even the tone of his voice. There is no paradox in saying that in the end Bresson played every part; and if a jury should sometime have the odd idea of awarding an acting prize to any player in this film, it could only go to Bresson.

Robert Bresson works alone; and the team about him—technicians and actors—must accept this as an imperative need of his talent and character. They exist simply as instruments: only Bresson creates. It is easy to see why he has found it virtually impossible to work with professional actors, and they with him. The uninitiated like ourselves realised, from the first day's shooting, that in crossing the studio threshold we had brought with us all that the director expected from us. We would give him the raw material of our appearance, our voices, above all our faces. It was not even necessary that we should be over-aware of how Bresson was moulding us into our various parts. On the contrary, if each player, consciously or not, had tried to establish his own relation to the reality he was playing, there would have been a risk of the film's deteriorating into a conventional adventure story. Moreover, nothing would have been gained if the actors had tried to evaluate their own parts, the relationship to the other characters and to the film's situation. It was essential that Bresson should be in complete command: the "blind" sympathy won from his collaborators by his extreme courtesy (good manners which never become obsequious) proves more effective than a degree of independent understanding on their part which could only be relative and, finally, incomplete.



The prison yard at Fort Montluc: Roland Monod is on the extreme left of the picture.

Sheltering behind this defensive courtesy, Bresson can protect his creative personality, work out his secret processes. But it is a courtesy whose wheels turn in a void; it does not really involve him with other people; it makes him both indefatigable and invulnerable.

4

The whole of Bresson is in the history of the film's title. His script followed almost literally André Devigny's story of his escape, adding some details from de Pury's *Prison Diary*. Consequently the film was provisionally announced under the title of Devigny's account—*Un Condamné à Mort s'est Echappé*. Then, during the shooting, and as the rushes were projected in the evenings, one realised that this literal faithfulness was only a marvellous pretext for Bresson; that out of the "exceptional" adventure, he was creating an "eternal" work, devoted to the glory of the Divine Grace and Will. Devigny had become Fontaine; and the pastor the expression of that apparently passive faith from which the active draws its own strength and energy. Bresson himself said: "I would like to show this miracle: an invisible hand over the prison, directing the course of events, making such and such a thing succeed for one and not for another. The film is a mystery. *The wind bloweth where it listeth*". While the unit exhausted its energies over the weeks, trying to think of a final title for the film—a title whose primary virtue was to be acceptable to the public—Bresson quite naturally kept for his film's title this phrase, spoken by Christ to Nicodemus, which the pastor slips to Fontaine copied out on a scrap of paper, upon which Fontaine meditates in his cell, and which, quite as much as the spoon handle he has sharpened on the stone floor, enables him to break down the metal-bound door: *The wind bloweth where it listeth*.

Out of his account of a triumphant episode in one man's life, Bresson has made a tribute to the human quality which he admires most and knows best, because he has it himself: stubbornness. It could almost be regarded as an autobiographical film. This may explain why Commandant Devigny, who had at Bresson's request applied for a prolonged leave from the army so that he could be present during the making of the film "to check its authenticity down to the smallest detail", was in fact consulted only two or three times.

5

Bresson seems to get the best out of his collaborators after having thoroughly confused them as to his intentions. In leisure as in his work, he uses paradox with a virtuosity which makes him appear at once engaging and remote. His friend Charbonnier, the painter (whose décors, both in this

film and in *Journal d'un Curé*, are so tastefully discreet that probably no one has noticed them) one day made a remark to me which has a good deal of truth in it. "If Bresson were told, 'The producer has gone broke; the studio must be cleared tomorrow; the actors' contracts expire today', he would reflect a moment and then announce, 'That's all right; then we'll shoot tomorrow'. Then he would wander off serenely—very English." "And the next day?" I asked Charbonnier. "The next day—everyone would be there."

One day at Lyons, we were filming one of the courtyard scenes in which the prisoners line up at the water-tap. First . . . second . . . third . . . sixth take. (No one ever really knows when and why we stop, since Bresson, having no faith in that black monster the camera, will always, even when a take seems perfect, insist on another "for safety's sake".) "One more", says Bresson. "There won't be time", interrupts the cameraman Burel, looking at the sky through his smoked glass, "It's going to cloud over". Without a glance at the sky, Bresson insists: "Oh yes; there'll be time. Camera! Action!" And he goes to work on the scene at a relentless pace . . . the prisoners march faster, only three drops of water in each bucket . . . "Cut!" And turning triumphantly towards Burel: "There! What did I tell you?"

Everything about Bresson is a matter of contrast and paradox. His grey hair, his youthful, vigorous movements; the charm of his clear and rather cold eyes, the calm and penetrating authority of his serious, warm voice; the almost indolent grace of some of his attitudes, the strength in his large sculptor's hands; his appearance of absent-mindedness, and his deep, inexorable tenacity of purpose. In his handling of his actors, there is a further paradox: their share of freedom, their exercise of intelligence, consists in accepting that instructions such as "give—holding back", and "faster—slowing down" can have some meaning.

This, I believe, is one aspect of the cat-and-mouse technique, the slightly sadistic advantage gained through the discomfiture of others, that François Leterrier called, amongst ourselves, "*Bressonite*". Certainly Leterrier, working closely with Bresson for a hundred days (the period of Devigny's detention at Montluc), had more opportunities than I did to experience and suffer from it.

In Robert Bresson I found, finally, a man who applies in his life—without provocation, and with a sovereign ease—the three moral precepts of Prévert: *Never complain; never apologise; never explain*.

We are grateful to the editors of *Cahiers du Cinéma* for permission to reprint this article, which first appeared in their issue of November, 1956. The article has been slightly abridged here.

Un Condamné à Mort s'est Echappé

A REVIEW

THE subject is simple. It comes from an escape story by a member of the French secret service called André Devigny. In 1943 he was arrested and interrogated by the Gestapo at Lyons. He made an attempt to escape from a moving car while being taken to prison. It failed. Recaptured and beaten up, he was placed in solitary confinement at the prison called Fort Montluc. He was still determined to escape, only more carefully. After several weeks he managed to dissect three panels from his wooden cell door with an iron spoon that he'd sharpened against the floor. The next stage was to make a rope. The springs of his bed, uncoiled one by one, were a starting point. A parcel of shirts and pyjamas from his family arrived fortunately to be torn into strips and knotted round the springs. Months have passed now. He is ready and yet he does nothing, suddenly overtaken by an inner

lethargy. It is only another interview with the Gestapo and the pronouncement of his death sentence that impel him to action. He will escape now. But a sixteen year old boy is put in the same cell with him. Is he an informer for the Germans? Ragged and lousy, he tells a story of hiding out and eventual capture, but he wears part of a German uniform. For two days Fontaine, as the hero is called, wonders whether to trust him or kill him. They escape together.

The book is apparently a straightforward personal record of the kind that has served as a basis for many postwar war films, most of them "dignified" and superficial. Robert Bresson uses *Un Condamné à Mort s'est Echappé* to make a film that is only indirectly about war, directly about a human being in isolation. The result is a work of art that raises inner experience to a very



Jost and Fontaine.

pure, intense, concentrated level. "This is a true story. I show it as it happened, without any embellishment," Bresson says characteristically in a preface. I suppose the important distinction is between "true" and "factual". One can think of many recent war films, particularly those made in Britain, which are impeccably factual and utterly untrue, because they have no angle of vision. With Bresson the vision is everything. He has changed many of the facts in Devigny's book. And he himself was taken prisoner by the Germans in 1940. During his stay in prison of more than a year, he met Father Bruckberger, who was to become an important friend and influence in his life and wrote the story for Bresson's first film, *Les Anges du Péché*. Bresson has given this one an alternative title: *Le Vent Souffle où il Veut*.

In *Un Condamné à Mort*, war is a presence felt but very little seen. We see, mainly, a grey forbidding world enclosed within high medieval walls. Shabby figures move down corridors on their way to a melancholy yard or sit in a stifling cell. Violence happens offscreen, behind a closed door. Sometimes a cry is heard. The Gestapo and even the prison guards are fugitive, momentary figures. As a woman crosses the yard with a slop bucket, the sound of firing is heard. She hesitates for a moment and walks on. Inmates of the fortress, glimpsed in furtive conversation in the washroom or on the stairs, appear and disappear mysteriously. They may have been transferred, tortured, executed. One doesn't know.

The effect of war, though, is always present. It is seen in almost every face and action. It is like a developing tank in which the exposed human negative is laid. The picture comes out, character and personality have taken outline. Fontaine often talks in the washroom to a man with a thin, shifty, haunted face. He learns that he was betrayed to the Germans by his wife. The man is living with this fact in a little cell and each day he looks more desperate and unforgiving. One day he makes a futile, hysterical attempt at escape and that is the end of him. In the cell next to Fontaine's is an old man who always wears a crumpled hat. Morose and aloof, he disparages Fontaine's plans to escape. It

will never work. Better to accept imprisonment and hope to escape with your neck. But on his first day in prison Fontaine also looks out from his window at a man walking in the yard. He comes up and offers to smuggle out a letter to his family. Later, he manages to get a safety pin to him which will unlock his handcuffs. Later, he disappears.

All these people come as if from nowhere and encounter each other for the first time. Some feel instinctive solidarities. Others are cautious and mistrustful. So-and-so is reported to be in the confidence of the Gestapo, so-and-so is all right, so-and-so plans to escape but his plan is no good, so-and-so was taken off for questioning today. All this in brief muttered conversations, before returning again to solitude.

So all the real dramas are interior. At the centre of the story, Fontaine refuses to despair. He plans and works patiently, minutely for escape. Like the hero of *Journal d'un Curé de Campagne*, he is a quiet, withdrawn, compassionate man who lives at a distance from his fellows. At first they are uncertain of him, later they recognise his strength. But unlike the priest his end is not in agony but in ecstasy. With Jost, the boy, he has scaled the last wall. Jost looks round with an incredulous grin: "If my mother could see me now!" Fontaine smiles. They walk off together into a cold night, towards smoke from a train passing under a nearby bridge. It is a moment of appropriately strange and muted elation. They are going back into an occupied country and the danger is not over.

Bresson has built up this point with a slow, deliberate concentration. One might think his approach too slow for a story that also contains physical tension, but there is always an inner meaning behind the physical action and the one heightens the other. (Interesting to compare the first part of the film with the first part of Hitchcock's *The Wrong Man*. The Hitchcock is brilliant in its way, which is that of immediate melodramatic effect. He creates no world of prison, only a series of surface impressions.) The prison world created by Bresson suggests Kafka

(Continued on page 53)



TEN FEET TALL

LINDSAY
ANDERSON

"A Man is Ten Feet Tall."

Two working men, one white, one negro, talk quietly together in a New York bar: the white man is nervous and insecure; the negro, mature, intelligent and reassuring, holds out the hand of sympathy . . . Emotionally undeveloped and dominated by his parents, a brilliant young baseball player is driven to breakdown by his father's ruthless craving for vicarious success . . . An adolescent boy, resentful of his father's apparent indifference, is driven almost to delinquency before the relationship is mended . . . One intelligent and conscientious man on the jury of a murder trial sways his fellow members from thoughtless condemnation to a responsible acquittal . . . A party of young New York office workers, feting the marriage of one of their number, sit mournfully together swigging whisky and watching pornographic 16mm. films . . . These are some of the incidents, some of the themes, in a remarkable group of films which has just come out of America; with their serious concern for individual problems, their liberal social sense and the general feeling of intelligence which informs them all, they represent the most encouraging sign of life in the American cinema for some years.

1

Creatively, Hollywood's prestige is no longer high. The situation was interestingly summed up in an article in the last issue of *SIGHT AND SOUND*, *Hollywood in the Age of Television*, in which Penelope Houston outlined the economic background of the flight to big screens and new, exhibitionistic techniques. There was one omission in the article, however, which was surprising: there was no mention specifically of what Hollywood films are now about. Or, more importantly still, of what they are *not* about. But this decline in the vitality and importance of the American cinema is not one that can be discussed simply in terms of the threat of television. After all, as a matter of purely historical fact, the Committee for the Investigation of Un-American Activities came first.

When we look back on the immediate postwar years in

Hollywood, we discover that they were lively and promising ones. Many of the big men returned strengthened by their wartime experiences and set up ambitiously as independent producers. But even more hopeful was the emergence of a younger generation of abundant talent: Elia Kazan had made his debut with films like *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* and *Boomerang*; Huston was going from strength to strength (*Sierra Madre*, *We Were Strangers*, *The Asphalt Jungle*); Dmytryk directed *Crossfire*, and Abraham Polonsky wrote *Body and Soul* for Rossen and himself directed *Force of Evil*. And there were younger names that raised expectations. Dassin made *Brute Force* and *The Naked City* for Mark Hellinger; John Berry made *From This Day Forward*, that most charming of forgotten New York romances; and Joseph Losey gave us *The Dividing Line*. There were the first productions of Stanley Kramer. Referring to an old issue of *Sequence*, I find its list of films "most enjoyed in 1949". It includes *Force of Evil*, *They Met By Night*, *We Were Strangers*, *The Set-Up*, *The Treasure of Sierra Madre*, *Moonrise*, *The Window*, *Letter From An Unknown Woman* and *Act of Violence*. This was Spring, 1950. It is not insignificant that the next issue of *Sequence*, the summer number of that year, started with a report and a protest: the appeals of the "Hollywood Ten" had been finally dismissed, and they were sent to jail.

The Hollywood situation today is, by comparison, a depressing one. Defeat is in the air. As we know (and their position is discussed in another article in this issue), Dassin, Berry, Polonsky, Losey, Carl Foreman have not been able to work in Hollywood for several years. The same is true of a number of writers. Dmytryk and Kazan have seen the light. . . . Huston, self-caricatured now as an exile, an eccentric, returned recently to Hollywood to direct a story about a nun and a marine. Joseph L. Mankiewicz has progressed from *House of Strangers* and *No Way Out* to *The Barefoot Contessa* and *Guys and Dolls*. In the work of younger directors like Nicholas Ray, Robert Aldrich and

Richard Brooks, there is evident a tension, a nervous dissatisfaction, that somehow prevents them using their talent to the full. It is as though their films were made in an atmosphere heavy with social and economic pressures; an atmosphere of timid, or resigned conformity or hysterical protest: at any rate an atmosphere in which lavishness and hack show-biz formulae are preferred to sincere expression or the stimulus of controversy. Perhaps salvation could only come from the outside.

This, anyway, seems to be what is happening. For, quite extraordinarily, all the films in this group are the work of people whose background is not the cinema, but television. They smack of New York rather than Hollywood. Only one of the directors has worked in the cinema before; and this marks their work in an interesting, if sometimes rather restrictive, way. But far more important than any limitations are the qualities common to all of them: qualities of seriousness (which does not eliminate comedy), of respect for humanity (and this includes their audiences); and above all, of a constructive, contemporary regard.

The constructive note is important. Consider the difference between *The Young Stranger* (reviewed last quarter by Derek Prouse) and *Rebel Without a Cause*. Of course, from certain points of view Ray's film is 'better': more assured, more powerful, more personal. But it is an obsessed film, in which the artist remains completely identified with his subject, unable to show it in any sort of perspective. *The Young Stranger* wants to see its problem all round, and it wants to resolve it. In fact, all these films, to a greater or lesser extent, resolve their problems, or at least indicate possible solutions. Some may find this return to the classical tradition of American optimism old-fashioned. But then, we have had all fashions now; and there is surely something equally retrogressive in the romanticism of directors like Ray and Aldrich, whose preferred heroes are lone wolves, rejected leaders, Prometheus chained to their rocks. We are apt to talk sloppily, and romanticism is often equated with idealism (and both with 'sentimentality'). This is an error; these new films are optimistic, idealistic too if you like, but they are not romantic.

2

Admittedly, *A Man Is Ten Feet Tall* (director, Martin Ritt; script, Robert Alan Arthur) looks at first as though it is going to be. It has certain superficial affinities with *On The Waterfront*—the dockland setting, a melodramatic start, even the theme of a young 'outsider's' struggle for maturity. Axel (John Cassavetes) is on the run, a deserter from the Army, the victim of an unhappy relationship with his father and an unresolved emotional attachment to his brother, for whose death he considers himself responsible. He arrives on the waterfront and gets a job shifting freight, under a corrupt and bullying foreman who takes a rake-off from his wages. He finds a friend in Tommy (Sidney Poitier), an alert and friendly negro, who takes him home, introduces him to his family, finds him a girl, and tries to bring him out of his shell. But in the end there is a fight (again Axel is in a sense responsible), and Tommy is killed. Axel can prove his manhood and his self-respect only by bringing his friend's murderer to justice.

One's first impression is that this is a film that has not quite found its style. It opens as melodrama, with a misleading, thrilling first sequence, banal (pseudo-sophisticated) suspense music and smart credit titles (Saul Bass again). And the recourse to violence for the story's climax and resolution also invokes a rather over-familiar convention (one is reminded of a somewhat similar limitation in *Act of Violence*). But the strength of *A Man Is Ten Feet Tall* is not in its melodrama but in its delicate feeling for character and relationship, the

seriousness of its concern for human values, for the problems and rewards of living. This gives its comedy a peculiar, most touching charm: Tommy's home, his bright, vivacious wife, the gay, self-conscious evening when Axel is introduced to Ellen, and they all go dancing. There is a moral awareness in those scenes (and in the acting too) which makes the film real and moving all the time, not just in the scenes where Axel reveals himself to his friend, and Tommy tries to show him what friendship means, and why courage and integrity are important. Best of all, the statement about the relationship of black and white is most of the time implicit; and therefore most forceful. One regrets all the more that it has in the end to be raised by angry voices.

3

Relationship between father and son is fundamental again in *Fear Strikes Out* (director, Robert Mulligan; script by Ted Berkman and Raphael Blau). The attitude here has many of the same attractive qualities; and the chief merit of the film is the honest, straightforward way it tells its true story: the facts are dramatic enough in themselves. Again a sensitive concern for human values is basic. Jim Piersall (Anthony Perkins) is completely dominated by his father, an unsuccessful baseball player who is determined that his son shall achieve the success he has missed: this is egotism masquerading as love, and the film is accurate and unsparing in its exposure of it. The boy becomes a baseball professional; marries; achieves a certain success. But his father's domination never lets up, and the tension grows and grows until the inevitable breakdown. We see the treatment; the boy's realisation of his father's true, unconscious motives; and his final recovery. The facts are humanised (very well) and explained; and perhaps that is the chief merit of the film. Mental illness is no different from any other kind of illness, says the psychiatrist to Piersall's father. "You try telling that to the people outside", comes the answer. And that is what *Fear Strikes Out* does, cleanly, intelligently and absorbingly.

In their different ways, *Twelve Angry Men* (director, Sidney Lumet) and *Bachelor Party* are also films about maturity. The first of them is perhaps the least ambitious of the group; or at least the most frankly a suspenseful entertainment. Adapted very directly by Reginald Rose from a television play, it takes place almost entirely in the jury room at a murder trial; and it shows how the laziness or prejudice of the majority of the jurors are gradually overcome by the honest doubt and obstinate sense of duty of a single member. The attitude here is admirable; and so are the neatly raised criticisms of social irresponsibility and race prejudice, and the exposure of unconscious bias on the part of people who imagine themselves fair-minded. The script is ingeniously contrived, with the gradual emergence of the facts of the case



"Bachelor Party:" "... jocular restaurant dinner".



"Fear Strikes Out": Anthony Perkins.

as well as the personalities of the jurors, but, as was inevitable, the end of the film relapses into gimmicks, with fabricated turning-points and a series of highly over-simplified conversions. (One certainly cannot believe that the members of a jury would notice, or remember, that a witness had indentations on the side of her nose, which proved that she habitually wore spectacles and therefore had poor eyesight...)

Bachelor Party is considerably more ambitious, and more successful. Written by Paddy Chayevsky, and again directed by Delbert Mann, it is another realist picture of working New York (slightly up in the social scale from *Marty*), this time centred on the marriage of a shy, inhibited office worker, and the traditional night "on the town" which he and his friends have to go through on the night before the ceremony. It is a sad picture, for all the wit and sharpness of its observation. The central character is not the bridegroom, but one of his friends, a decent, ambitious young husband, in love with his wife, but feeling himself somehow trapped—not just by marriage, but by the whole, hard competitive system in which he lives. He does not analyse the situation to himself in these terms, of course; he just knows that the news that his wife is going to have a child fills him with alarm. He does not feel ready for the responsibility, and somehow the life he lives does not satisfy his imaginative needs.

The body of the film is taken up with the party itself—starting with a jocular restaurant dinner, degenerating into a sad drag from bar to bar, including a sadly farcical encounter with a blowsy prostitute, and winding up at a hectic, equally futile Greenwich Village party. In all this, the atmosphere of nerves and frustration is brilliantly established: the bedroom scene with which the story opens, with the young husband sitting despondently in his pyjamas as his wife telephones her mother to tell her she is pregnant; the office

wolf conducting his intrigues by phone as his colleagues watch and listen with exasperation and envy; the fearful bridegroom's hesitant confession of reluctance. At times, it is true, Chayevsky seems to some extent the prisoner of his talent: the level remains the same, the relationships are relatively conventional, and the ending (love keeps us going) is facile. All the same, *Bachelor Party* shows us a lot; some of its touches are, for the cinema, extremely daring; and its attitude is humane, sensitive, liberal.

4

But the liberalism of these films is not of the kind we are rather over-familiar with in this country: stiff-lipped, frightened of the popular audience, without edge to it. It is not a liberalism which has lost its battle, and now can only affirm its values with a sceptical smile: humanity here is still an inspiration. And this is a quality for which we can envy the American cinema—to whose central humane tradition these films represent a brave return. They are not too inhibited to put it into words:

... The thing is—a man's gotta make a choice. You know, I mean—there are the men—and then there are the lower forms. And a guy's got to make a choice. You go with the men and, you're ten foot tall. You can go with the lower forms and you're down—in the slime.

The fine thing about these films is that the people responsible for them have made their choice; and this seems to have involved a determination to reject the spurious and meretricious elements in their cinema, to return to true sources of emotion and respect for principle. Unlike a number of good Hollywood films, they do not seem to have been made by accident: at least three of them are the result of producer-director partnerships that have already achieved outstanding work on television. Their pictures are well-built all through, excellently shot and crisply edited; and the acting makes one blink. I do not mean to imply that there is anything exhibitionist about it. From time to time, perhaps, there is a touch of Kazan-style mannerism in *A Man Is Ten Feet Tall*; but Sidney Poitier's performance as Tommy is quite outstanding in its delicacy, its shifting play of intuition and intelligence, as well as its warmth and drive. It is difficult to pick out special instances for praise in films which are altogether such splendid examples of ensemble-work; but young actors like Cassavetes and Perkins, Don Murray and James MacArthur, seem to represent a new generation of exceptional talent, honest in style and unstrained in their sensibility, considerably less egotistical than their immediate predecessors. Jack Warden, who appears in three of these films, gives each part a detailed and distinctive interpretation—and in this he typifies the skilled character playing throughout them. The chances go mostly to the men, but Kathleen Maguire and Ruby Dee, the two girls in *A Man Is Ten Feet Tall*, Perry Wilson as Piersall's mother in *Fear Strikes Out*, and Caroline Jones as the pathetic Greenwich Village screwball in *Bachelor Party*, all give performances of particular vividness and understanding.

Naturally, the influence of television on these films is strong. Now, in TV, an intimate contact with your characters, a fluent, abundant dialogue and a clear narrative line are almost essential; and their experience in the medium has given these directors a forceful, satisfying way with their stories. Where they at the moment tend to stop short is at the transcendence (or the jettisoning) of the dialogue-script which is the prerogative of the *film* director. There is still a certain constriction about their pictures, a tendency to stick close, to over-use the close-up, to under-explore background. I do not want to seem grudging. These films are fresh and exciting already, a decisive rejection of the "lower forms". They will just be even better when they are entirely of the cinema.



A Man Is Ten Feet Tall

Friendship between a Negro workman and a restless, insecure young white man is the theme of Martin Ritt's first film, adapted by Robert Alan Arthur from his own TV play. Above: Sidney Poitier, Kathleen Maguire and John Cassavetes.

The Young Stranger

Another television adaptation. James MacArthur (left) as the Hollywood producer's son who feels himself a stranger to his own family.



Film Reviews

SAINT JOAN

OTTO Preminger's decision to cast a wholly untried and inexperienced actress for his *Saint Joan* (United Artists) may be regarded as a film-maker's calculated gamble. Backing his own skill, and the appeal of an unknown face, against the hazards of the part, he proves in the event to have set his young actress an impossible task. Jean Seberg, the girl from Iowa whom Preminger selected last autumn after an intensively publicised international search, is a solemn, fragile and rather appealing young player: she speaks her lines inflexibly and with rather too many heavenward glances, but with evident sincerity; she gives the impression of trying desperately hard. But the most positive emotion this Saint Joan seems likely to arouse is pity. Shaw's "most notable warrior saint in the Christian calendar, and queerest fish among the eccentric worthies of the Middle Ages" has dwindled into a figure altogether less commanding and fanatical, less formidable and less interesting.

It may be the casting of this almost docile Joan that accounts for some occasional sentimentalising of Shaw's steel-strong play. Is Preminger, one begins to wonder, consciously essaying a "new interpretation", basing it on the Inquisitor's speech about Joan's essential youth and innocence? But a Saint Joan who is merely, or little more than, a childish innocent is not Shaw's heroine, and the crushing of a fore-doomed victim between the impersonal forces of Church and State is not the play's whole theme.

The script, inevitably, handles the text roughly and sometimes damagingly. Graham Greene's adaptation preserves the epilogue, in an abbreviated form, using it to frame the story in two long flashbacks. He has added some linking dialogue passages, including one odd and pointless little interlude between Warwick and his page, has cut the early scenes heavily, so that the film gets off to an uncertain start, and transposed fragments from the dialogue between Cauchon and Warwick to serve as a prelude to the trial. In cutting this lengthy and closely argued scene, in which bishop and earl are no longer characters in a play, but highly and impossibly articulate expressions of Shaw's theory of medieval society, and the roles played in it by Church and State, the script has taken its only practical course. The dilemma is obvious: the screen is no place for prolonged intellectual theorising, but when you take away the intellectual core of the play you also blur its outlines, soften its arguments, and lose the firm Shavian logic which makes it clear that Joan is not merely a victim and martyr but an intolerable nuisance to the orderly structure of the world around her.

Shaw, of course, foresaw it. In his preface he commented on the critics who would have preferred him to "excise all references to such undramatic and tedious matters as the Church, the feudal system, the Inquisition, the theory of heresy", and replace them by spectacle, battles and the actual burning of Joan on stage "on the principle that it does not matter in the least why a woman is burnt, provided she is burnt and people can pay to see it done". In fact, and to its credit, Preminger's film does not go so far, and its use of spectacle is remarkably abstemious. Joan is burnt on the screen, inevitably if not very realistically, but both the coronation and the raising of the siege of Orleans are very quietly done. Remembering the *Joan of Arc* of a few years ago, with Ingrid Bergman advancing on Orleans like a militant hockey captain, one may be grateful for this film's restraint. The sets, by Roger Furse, are somewhat drab and nondescript. The direction, while it strikes no imaginative sparks, at least plays fair by such of Shaw's text as survives. From Otto Preminger's recent productions, notably *The Man With the Golden Arm*, one might

have expected a certain amount of melodramatic excess. But his *Saint Joan*, though often flat, is seldom less than sober.

We are left, finally, with an abridged version of the play presented at repertory level. Richard Widmark mumbles and prances cleverly enough through the part of the Dauphin, whimsical and doltish but missing the pathos and also the knife-edge sharpness beneath the parade of imbecility. Richard Todd is a straightforward Dunois, Felix Aylmer and Anton Walbrook an impassive and sedate pair of clerics, and John Gielgud gives one of his chilly, impeccably phrased performances as Warwick. A robustly dogmatic Stogumber, by Harry Andrews, and a mournful Brother Martin, by Kenneth Haigh, are perhaps the film's best performances. For a final impression, though, one finds oneself returning again to Shaw, to his derisive comment on Saint Joan as interpreted by Mark Twain: "an attempt to combine Bayard with Esther Summerson from *Bleak House* into an unimpeachable American schoolteacher in armour". It is none of it, of course, Miss Seberg's fault.

PENELOPE HOUSTON.

THE SPIRIT OF ST. LOUIS

DURING May 20 and 21, 1927, Charles A. Lindbergh, a young American aviator, made the first non-stop flight between New York and Paris, his official time being 33 hours, 30 minutes, 29.8 seconds. Years later, Lindbergh gave his own account of the flight in his book *The Spirit of St. Louis*, named after his plane, on which Leland Hayward and Billy Wilder, producer and director, have based their film for Warner Brothers. The idea for the venture came while Lindbergh was mail-pilot on the St. Louis-Chicago run in the mid-twenties; then followed a difficult period while he tried to raise financial support, and further disappointments when various aircraft companies failed to comply with his plans. Finally, the little-known Ryan Company agreed to build a specially equipped monoplane. After intensive preparation in face of competition from other aviators, Lindbergh found himself embarking on the adventure that was to bring him international fame.

In transferring this story to the screen, Wilder and Leland Hayward (himself an aviator for many years) have gathered together a formidable array of associates. The aerial photography was carried out by Tom Tutwiler; Paul Mantz, the veteran film pilot, designed a new *Spirit of St. Louis* from the original Ryan blueprints; and Charles Eames, the architect and designer, was production consultant and supervisor of the montage sequences. The purely technical problems—a mixture of studio and location shooting in several countries, CinemaScope aerial photography,



Richard Todd and Jean Seberg in "Saint Joan".



"The Spirit of St. Louis": preparing for the take-off from Roosevelt Field.

model work, period reconstruction—are therefore managed with all the professionalism and flair that Hollywood can muster for such occasions.

The presentation of the story itself, by Wilder and his co-scriptwriter Wendell Mayes, is less happily organised, however. Lindbergh is not only the central figure throughout, but during the latter half the narrative is, of necessity, restricted to one man, a plane and the limitless ocean below. Such a situation might provide a director of Bresson's sensibilities with the opportunity for an analysis of the flyer's sense of isolation, his particular tensions. Rejecting the obvious austerities of such an approach, Wilder has adopted a direct, extroverted style which avoids false melodramatics and, without any deep exploration of character, stresses his hero's idealism and strength of will. Although the general pattern of Lindbergh's original is followed, with its often lively flashbacks into his past life, an element of vulgarisation has also been imposed on an essentially sober account. Some spurious, rough-and-ready "comic" interpolations, notably a semi-slapstick anecdote involving an Army airfield and an irate officer, disastrously dissipate the tensions of the flight itself; also the characterisation of the jolly and (to non-Catholic eyes) slightly repugnant little priest, and Lindbergh's whimsical conversations with a fly in the cockpit of *The Spirit*, seem alien to the flyer's personality.

Obviously such a project must largely depend on the actor chosen to portray its hero, who emerges from the self-portrait of his book as a quietly tenacious young pioneer, imbued with a kind of idealistic innocence. The choice of James Stewart seems initially an unwise one, for not only does he lack the essential youth of his model, but he has acquired through the years a set of comic mannerisms inextricably associated with his screen personality. In the event, however, these mannerisms are mainly restricted to the scenes of building and preparation; Stewart's playing in the later stages is on the whole likeably sharp and pointed. One long episode in particular, during which Lindbergh falls asleep at the controls and is awakened by a shaft of sunlight filtering through the cockpit, is

very skilfully managed by both actor and director.

Wilder's handling is seen at its most positive both here and when dealing with the strictly factual aspects of what remains an unusually compelling adventure story. This terse, sharply documented style is most evident in the scenes showing the take-off from Roosevelt Field: the final preparations, the uncertain farewells before the plane taxis out into the mud and mist, strikingly evoke the "feel" of a great adventure. The details of the flight are also well documented, culminating in Lindbergh's famous cry of "Which way is Ireland?" as he circles above the astonished crews of the off-shore fishing-boats. After urging *The Spirit* over Ireland's green fields and scurrying sheep, he finally sees the lights of Le Bourget far below, a genuinely thrilling moment somewhat marred by Franz Waxman's heavily over-orchestrated motto-theme. Following the quiet moment of landing, the rapturous welcome by thousands of Parisians provides an eye-catching set piece and symbolises Lindbergh's subsequent triumphal passage through Europe and America.

The qualified achievement of the film seems, in a way, to reflect the uneasiness currently felt by American film-makers over their audiences' willingness to accept the bare truth of a story. Apparently Lindbergh's flight is now only distantly remembered by younger members of the jet age public; and this fact may have influenced the decision to include those elements of supposedly "popular" appeal which periodically disfigure the narrative. Lindbergh's own account undoubtedly tells us more about the man himself than does this adaptation, which also misses the feeling of mystical exultation experienced by many flyers and perhaps most eloquently expressed in the writings of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. Despite his considerable talents, Wilder would seem temperamentally ill-suited to an exploration of this level of experience. In *Spirit of St. Louis*, though, the director often seems closer to his subject than for some time, and for all its equivocations the film emerges as a genuine tribute to a dedicated man.

JOHN GILLET.



"Funny Face": Fred Astaire and Audrey Hepburn.

FUNNY FACE

"AN intimate musical" was Stanley Donen's own advance description of his new film *Funny Face* (Paramount). In these days of CinemaScope versions of Broadway musicals in which (as in *Guys and Dolls*) the humour and the true and touching emotional qualities of the original are dissipated in the acres of screen-space and the aeons of screen-time, the description was an appetising one. We further learned that the musical teamed Audrey Hepburn with Fred Astaire, in a story of a fashion photographer who discovers in a Greenwich Village bookstore the ideal model for a high-fashion magazine, and takes her to Paris to photograph her in a famous couturier's new dresses. We could guess most of the rest; but a predictable story has never been an acute disadvantage for a musical, and in this case a certain stylishness and sophistication were promised by the background of fashion design and publicity, the cast, and the score, mostly consisting of old Gershwin songs. It is possible, of course, that the result could have been as cold, unsympathetic, and unreal as the world conjured up by the writers of *Vogue*, who seem always to be running a slight temperature as they breathlessly inform us what People Are Talking About, what Mrs. Exeter will wear, and what lady ambassadors of the United States serve for supper. Even this, perhaps, might have been a preferable alternative to the increasingly unbearable saccharine cosiness of Rodgers and Hammerstein (whose recent version of *Cinderella* on American television represented what George Jean Nathan once called, speaking of the works of Sir James Barrie, "the triumph of sugar over diabetes").

Funny Face, to one's intense relief, in fact emerges as the most charming and enjoyable musical since *My Sister Eileen*, and like Quine's film it gives hope that the American Lyric Cinema can survive in spite of CinemaScope and the decline of some of its creators. Donen of course occupies a most honourable place in the list of builders of the tradition: this is his and Roger Edens' first film away from M-G-M. The break, and its success, are both significant. At the M-G-M studios, where so many pioneering films in the genre were made, the musical seems recently to have

turned towards such inane vulgarities as *Meet Me in Las Vegas* and *The Opposite Sex*. At Paramount, Edens and Donen seem to have been allowed a free hand to experiment. Some of the ideas in *Funny Face* doubtless have their origins in earlier films: thus the number "Bonjour Paris" tries to do for that city what "We're Going On the Town" did for New York—it is also partly shot in the triple-split screen technique used in *It's Always Fair Weather*.

But Donen has by no means confined himself to the repetition of ideas he has used before. The sequence in which Astaire is seen photographing Audrey Hepburn all over Paris—in the Tuileries in the rain, at a railway station, on a fishing boat on the Seine, inside the Louvre before the Winged Victory—is brilliantly conceived and realised, each shot being arrested as a still photograph in negative, then in black and white positive, and finally with the addition of isolated or deliberately distorted colour. Here the collaboration of the fashion photographer Richard Avedon with Ray June, the lighting cameraman, and Frank Bracht, the editor, results in a sequence of extraordinary beauty and interest: the quality of the light is often truly impressionist. Certainly colour has rarely been used as creatively on the screen as here—indeed throughout the film the lighting is most striking and imaginative. This swiftly moving sequence culminates in a dance number in a pastoral setting in which the song, the dance, the playing, the lighting, and the rhythm of the whole combine to produce an intensity of sweet lyricism that shows poetry is still possible in the musical film.

In this and other scenes Audrey Hepburn is utterly captivating: while her voice is no more than adequate, she dances charmingly with Astaire, though with a hint of insecurity in solo passages. The occasional artificiality of her screen personality does not, on the whole, obtrude itself, though one may regret those scenes in which the script requires her to pretend to be a Bohemian intellectual with a forbidding propensity for polysyllables. Her adherence to an imaginary Parisian philosophy called "Empathicalism", with Michel Auclair as its sinister chief exponent, was presumably felt to be necessary to provide some fairly perfunctory conflict in the story; but the attempts at satire at the expense of Greenwich Village or Left Bank intellectualism are as wide of the mark and as childish as these things usually are in the movies. This stricture covers also the "modern" dance number performed by Hepburn and two boys in a *bistro*: this is presumably the kind of dancing known to non-dancers as "interpretative".

Some thirty years ago Astaire was appearing in a musical called *Funny Face* with his sister Adele: only he and some of the tunes survive in its namesake. He is one of those rare and comforting dance artists—Danilova is another—who make nonsense of the passage of time. In his long solo number, when he dances in familiar style with his umbrella, then uses his raincoat as a matador's cape in a spectacular parody of a bullfight, he is as nimble, elegant, and deft as ever.

Kay Thompson proves in this belated screen debut to be a marvellous monster indeed: angular, rangy, and rapacious, she is everything one might fear the editor of a *Voguish* magazine to be. The timing and technical expertise of her numbers enhance this impression of shattering efficiency: she is at the same time engagingly grotesque, especially in the number with Astaire, when, disguised as folk singers from Tallahassee, Florida, they invade a Bohemian party.

This is altogether a heartening and invigorating film as well as a pleasurable one. It is especially refreshing to find fulfilled the promise of a certain sophistication in the assembly of creative elements—Audrey Hepburn's Givenchy wardrobe, for instance, perfectly sets off her entrancing gravity, and the film is given notable visual distinction by the collaboration of Avedon, and musical distinction by some of Gershwin's loveliest tunes. Loring's choreography is best when it is simplest: he never quite attains the brilliance of his earlier collaboration with Astaire, in *Yolanda and the Thief*, save in that ravishing pastoral duet; and that is a dance-image (Astaire and Hepburn floating away on a raft, like the end of a fairy-tale) that will linger in the mind.

DAVID VAUGHAN.

THE PRINCE AND THE SHOWGIRL

WHEN Terence Rattigan's *The Sleeping Prince* was first produced on the stage, as a coronation year *divertissement*, it fizzled a little damply. Considerable finesse in staging and performance could not obscure the fact that Mr. Rattigan had not provided very much in the way of a play, had set his players to ride a somewhat rickety vehicle. On the screen, and with the

more explicit title of *The Prince and the Showgirl* (Warners), the piece remains essentially a star vehicle. The new title itself seems to hark deliberately backwards, suggesting a musical comedy out of the play's own period, the Edwardian twilight, with a chorus line that has just discovered ragtime.

Unexpectedly for such a practised craftsman, Rattigan here deals out all his cards face upwards in the first few scenes. The cards—all of course court cards—are confidently shuffled, the encounter between Elsie Marina, the astute, innocent American Cinderella, and her Balkan Grand Duke is entertainingly formulated. But when it comes to playing out the hand, developing the comedy's evolutions, it becomes increasingly apparent, here as on the stage, that the script holds no aces. The fresh winds of the Middle West blow briefly through Belgrave Square; the seducer finds himself seduced; and the piece ends on a dying fall, slightly pathetic and slightly absurd, with Cinderella's return to the chorus, weighed down with Balkan honours. It all seems formally inevitable, a playwright's game of musical chairs, but without enough wit or buoyancy in the writing to sustain its impetus. Ruritania, in any case, has become tricky dramatic territory. Ivor Novello exploited it for chocolate-box sentiment, Lubitsch for the cynical smile, and Rattigan's way lies indeterminately between the two. Adapting his play for the screen, he has turned it if anything towards sentiment. We now see the court ball and the coronation (or, rather, the emotional impact of the coronation on the showgirl from Milwaukee); pomp and ceremony, the background to the play, have moved into the foreground of the picture.

In directing his first non-Shakespearean film, Laurence Olivier has kept mainly to a stage tempo. Lines are theatrically pointed, pauses held, the pace is muted. This method throws the performances into high relief, and it is inevitably for its playing, its much-publicised union of talents, that the film will be seen. Olivier himself repeats his stage performance, an accomplished exercise in building a sizeable pile of bricks without a great deal of straw. Stiff, guttural, heavily Teutonic, his Grand Duke is a character built up out of the telling detail. Exchanging vapid courtesies with a theatrical company, his voice tails off into polite boredom while the cold, alert eye wanders over the simpering faces. The slang expressions, spoken as though conscientiously memorised from a phrase-book, the wary joviality and unbending self-satisfaction are all shrewdly manipulated. A detached, stylised performance, it is clear-cut enough to present an arrogant, humourless character on his own not very likeable terms. And this, possibly, is a miscalculation in the writing: Ruritanian comedy-romance can scarcely afford an unsympathetic hero.

The showgirl's job, on the other hand, is simply to captivate; and Marilyn Monroe's honey and cream performance, her look of wide-eyed calculation and air of being a lost but resourceful innocent in an over-sophisticated world, are apt and endearing. This is a gentle performance, ably directed, and faltering only when the plot manoeuvres give the actress no alternative but to repeat effects. Sybil Thorndike, as the ageing dowager, also has to repeat herself. Her first scene of confident self-deception is fun, and everything that follows it merely a recapitulation. These, though, are flaws inherent in the piece itself. Mildly entertaining, *The Prince and the Showgirl* remains in essence what it initially seemed in the stage production—lemonade in a champagne bottle.

PENELOPE HOUSTON.

THE LOST CONTINENT

TRAVEL films usually fall into distinct categories. There is the superficial tour à la Fitzpatrick; the unadorned record of quaint native life, with commentary pedagogic or facetious; and the personal impression, of which *Song of Ceylon* remains perhaps the best example. *The Lost Continent* (Miracle) falls into a new category which can best be described (with apologies to John Griereson) as the "the creative interpretation of unreality". This film is the result of a visit to the Far East made several years ago by a team of well-known Italian film-makers, including Enrico Gras, under the leadership of Count Bonzi.

One may regret that Count Bonzi's interest lay in the primitive and spectacular survivals of a way of life he considers to be vanishing. This is a debatable approach and gives a less correct picture of the East of today than did *Song of Ceylon*, where age-old beliefs and customs were shown retaining their vitality in a society developing along modern lines. However, a producer must be allowed to interpret his material as he wishes. What he may not do is to mislead his audience into thinking that they are seeing a



"The Lost Continent": Balinese dancers.

factual film when they are, in fact, being shown a skilfully selected arrangement of scenes, used out of context, falsely associated, misleadingly commented and, in one case certainly, faked.

Following an introductory sequence shot in Hong Kong and the New Territories, *The Lost Continent* uses a patchwork of scenes from Buddhist Thailand, Moslem Java and Hindu Bali to present a picture of life in an area referred to by the commentator as "The Happy Islands". There is no attempt to identify more precisely the location of any scene, with the exception of the Dyak sequences in Sarawak. The people throughout are referred to as "Malays" and an ancient map of the East Indian archipelago links sequences. There is little doubt that the average member of the audience will leave the cinema believing that he has seen a factual film about Indonesia.

To anyone who knows the area, the first surprise comes with the discovery that this group of film-makers claim to have hazarded themselves and their valuable equipment on an "expedition" in a primitive schooner. The area they visited is adequately supplied with reliable means of transport, and nothing on the screen indicates that the team ever deviated appreciably from the standard tourist circuit.

In these "Happy Islands", Buddhism appears to be the dominating religion. In fact, it has not been an active religion in Indonesia since the thirteenth century. Villagers go in procession to sacrifice animals to the spirits of a volcano and we see the Buddhist statues they are said to worship in caves below the crater. The volcano is in the Tengger region of East Java; the villagers are Moslems; there may be statues in the crater, but they are certainly not Buddhist, since this mountain area was the last stronghold of the pre-Islamic Shivaist empire of Mataram. Furthermore, Buddhism forbids the taking of all life.

Bull-races are said to be part of the ritual attending the rice-harvest. It is true that bull-races were formerly held in the flooded rice-fields of Bali, but they were associated with ploughing and not with harvest. The races in the film were staged in Madura where rice is not grown. The people are stock-breeders and these races originated as an annual test of the quality of the local cattle.

The young girls dancing in front of a Balinese temple are not priestesses, nor is their dance specifically related, as we are led to



"Friends for Life"

believe once again, with the rice-harvest. Dancing does form part of Balinese temple ceremonial, but the dances shown are secular and have none of the mystical significance given to them by the commentary.

Scenes such as the closely-grouped fishermen casting their nets are so obviously staged for the cameraman's benefit that comment is unnecessary. Much more serious licence has, however, been taken to produce a sequence which, we are told, shows fishermen carrying out exorcistic rites at the cremation of one of their fellows who has been drowned. The men sit in a circle chanting. Their waving hands, we are told, represent the waves of the sea and the girls who dance in their midst, the daughters of the dead fisherman, symbolise boats. The body is being cremated nearby. In fact, the film-makers have here re-staged (with unrealistically new and identical coolie-hats for all the male performers) a currently popular Balinese attraction called "Ketjak", known to tourists as the "Monkey Dance". Usually performed at night, by the light of flickering oil-lamps, it interprets a theme from the Hindu Ramayana, and has nothing whatsoever to do with fishermen, boats or cremation.

These comments, which can be extended to almost every sequence in the film, perhaps make it clear that Count Bonzi and his colleagues cannot claim realism for the picture they brought back from the East. Unfortunately the visual impact of CinemaScope colour-photography of beautiful people in a beautiful part of the world is so powerful that most audiences will accept the film—as, with regrettably few exceptions, did the London critics.

The Italians ill repay the hospitality and assistance given to them during their tour by presenting this false picture of a progressive and rapidly-developing area of the world; how much better it would have been had they appreciated the way in which ancient custom and modern thought are being blended to produce a new and vital culture. As the peoples of the world grow closer together, films can help towards understanding, by underlining the essential human similarities between peoples of varied religion and culture. The makers of *The Lost Continent* had the talent and money to make a valuable film; they have been content to use their material on the lower plane of box-office sensationalism.

KAY MANDER.

FRIENDS FOR LIFE

FRANCO Rossi's *Friends for Life* (Contemporary) is something of an amalgam between *The Spanish Gardener* and the earlier pages of *Les Enfants Terribles*. Franco, the son of an Italian diplomat recently returned from London, is sent to school in Rome. There

he meets Mario, who is the son of the artist-owner of a ceramic factory; their acquaintance—which begins in a corridor when they have both been sent out of the room—soon becomes a firm friendship. Franco often visits Mario's home; and as his father closed their own house after his wife's death eight years previously and now lives in expensive hotels, the boy tries, using these visits as his bricks, to construct a mirage of 'home' upon the glittering surface of his instability.

Their idyll develops: there are momentary jealousies, minor squabbles; but Lambretta splutterings, their shouts and confidences, remain the undisturbed piping of urban fauns.

When Franco's father is posted to the Sudan, Mario arranges that his friend shall come to live with his family; and life appears to produce the perfect solution to one of its equations. Both boys enter for a cross-country race: Mario—who has been sure of victory—is attacked by cramp, and Franco goes on to win. Mario knows of his friend's devotion to the memory of his dead mother and resentfully (because of his humiliation over the race) but largely unwittingly, initiates a joke in the class which jags at the hypersensitive surface of this attachment. Franco, profoundly hurt, runs away from school and prepares to leave Italy with his father. Mario follows him to the airport and manages to see him just before the plane leaves. Their vow of eternal friendship is renewed. According to the publicity magazine *Unitalia Film* (September 1955), the film should end with Mario's arriving at the airport when the plane has already left the ground, and his crying of "Forgive me" over the roar of its engines. The secondary ending used on the version shown in this country is perhaps less 'artistically' satisfying, but certainly more humanly comfortable.

To say that an actor 'lives' a part is generally a questionable compliment; but Geronimo Meynier and Andrea Scire, who play Mario and Franco, seem to be improvising a dream and agony on their own behalf, regardless of script, director and arclights. Their unawareness of the camera is such that one forgets that this is a cinema. It is rather as though a detective had been following an actual juvenile involvement with a camera hidden in his boot or tie-knot; and the exact record of their upsets, reconciliations and broken dreams is a hard reminder that human beings are as much condemned to a perpetual craziness of the sentiments as they are to death.

In *Les Enfants Terribles* Cocteau wrote of Gerard's friendship for Dargelos: "This love ravaged him all the more because it preceded knowledge of love. It was an undefined intense malady whose remedy did not exist . . ." When Franco describes an imaginary girl-friend to Mario as being "like Ingrid Bergman with dark hair", he is both thinking of his mother and staring at his dark-haired friend; and one realises that the butterfly Cocteau pinned so delicately that it still breathes is being exhibited in quieter and less emotive surroundings. Yet despite this charm and the element of contemporary pastoral, there is also an undertone of feeling that *Friends for Life* may be a vignette portrayal of an early episode in the lives of Italianate and specialised rebels without a cause.

ROY EDWARDS.

L'AUBERGE ROUGE (*Cross Channel*), finally released after six years of censorship difficulties, is an important film, in that it represents an aspect of French thought which has rarely been so freely expressed on the screen. It is a moralist and polemical work; and must be credited at least as much to the writers Aurenche and Bost as to the director, Autant-Lara. A *comédie-noir* about a pair of murderous hoteliers who somehow or other exterminate all their guests, it makes a spirited attack upon the sacred or simply respectable values of bourgeois society. It is in the old tradition of the surrealists and Prévert; and the main target, traditionally, is the Catholic Church. Nevertheless, the attitude of the film is not entirely anti-clerical. The monk (played by Fernandel) is shown as being deserving enough to save his skin from the general massacre, even though he pays for it with his peace of mind. But the coach-load of bourgeois—their hypocrisy and cowardice having been exposed and scourged by the authors—have to be hurled into a chasm, the bridge over which has had its supports patiently sawn away by a Negro servant. The narrative, as one would expect from Aurenche and Bost, is flawlessly developed; the dialogue as sharp and blasphemous as anyone could wish.

Eventually, however, *L'Auberge Rouge* seems too literary; it is too concerted, gives too little scope for spontaneity or sensitivity. It is not, for example, only the poor playing which makes the young lovers so unconvincing. Where there should be poetry,

there is too often merely a dry bitterness. If one excepts Carette, with his wonderful savagery, and Françoise Rosay, the acting is uneven: Fernandel, round whom much of the action revolves, brings no more to his part than his usual apparatus of tics and grimaces.

These reservations apart, *L'Auberge Rouge* is a satisfying demonstration that conformism has not always the last word on the screen. But with the 'Centrale Catholique du Cinéma' boasting that it already controls more than 50 per cent of French production and that it will do better next year, it seems unlikely that there will be any similar films in the near future.—ALAIN TANNER.

THE SHIRALEE (M-G-M). "There was a man who had a cross and his name was Macauley". With this introduction *The Shiralee* begins; and what follows is possibly the most individual Ealing production for some time, a film not wholly satisfying but most agreeably even-tempered. Adapted by Neil Patterson and the director, Leslie Norman, from D'Arcy Nieland's rough-humoured but affectionate novel about the travels of an Australian swagman and his "shiralee" (burden), the story has been strikingly photographed in its natural terrain. It is this far from picturesque evocation of the raw, fertile land, rough in spirit, manner and speech, that gives the picture its main and considerable strength.

Macauley (Peter Finch) returns home from his wandering to find his wife (Elizabeth Sellars) with a lover. A fight follows, and after nearly killing his rival Macauley leaves the house, taking with him his five-year-old daughter. Jobless and wandering together through the wide Australian outback, Macauley resents his new-found responsibility; but eventually, after a series of shared hardships and reverses, the swagman comes to have genuine respect and admiration for his little "shiralee". Thankfully, in developing this central relationship between father and child, the film has steered clear of the kind of synthetic sentimentality that could well have damned one's acceptance of it. Macauley's gradual change of heart springs less from an increasing awareness of his responsibility as a parent than from a gruff and grudging respect for his daughter as a person. Peter Finch's assured performance complements this approach; and the little girl, Dana Wilson, is agreeably free from the "cute" mannerisms long employed by the Bobby Henrey school of diminutive charmers and displays an individual and rebellious spirit of her own.

The Shiralee is one of the more successful explorations of the Australian scene. Its faults are relatively minor: a tendency to ramble in its central passages, and also the unfortunate casting of several players who unwisely attempt the drawing Australian intonation via stage Cockney. The voice of rock'n'roller Tommy Steele is also a stranger in this fair proud land.—JOHN CUTTS.

THE TOMMY STEELE STORY (Anglo-Amalgamated) is an inexpensive and unpretentious film; but it is notable for brief glimpses of a reality rare in British cinema. The smoke-worn bricks of Frearn Street; the Steeles' Bermondsey living-room with its cheap ornaments, gaudy crockery and sauce-bottle on the tea-table; above all the easy, grinning, pocky-faced figure of Tommy Steele himself—beside these the loyal old English character parts (cockney mum and dad, ancient, eccentric junk-dealer, sweeper-philosopher) appear impossibly unreal. Tommy Steele lives out his part with an ease and freedom from affectation which make you suddenly despair of the politer conventions of film acting. It is the sort of performance which a few documentary directors have managed to win from non-actors; but here—one must assume from the inadequacy of the other performances—the credit is due not so much to the director (Gerard Bryant) as to an individual quality in Steele himself. Fortunately he entirely dominates the film, laughing and stomping his way through a dozen or more rock 'n' roll numbers with absolute assurance in his skill.

One of the most intriguing aspects of this picture is the apparent effort throughout to de-glamorise Steele's private and professional life. For example, 'The Two I's', where he made his first professional appearance, has in reality all the gay chi-chi of any coffee-bar; in the film it is represented as a kind of suburban snack-bar, whose shirt-sleeved proprietor warns Tommy gravely that So-o is no place for a lad to be alone in. The climax of the film (a teen-agers' concert, with Humphrey Lyttelton and the superb Nancy Whiskey) has no more exotic setting than the Bermondsey Town Hall. Whatever the reason (it may be an ingenious publicity line to identify Tommy as closely as possible with his unsophisticated teen-age admirers) it seems healthy and optimistic enough.—

DAVID ROBINSON.



Beat the Clock! Bury Your Hatchet! Double Your Money! Make Up Your Mind! Spot the Tune! Take Your Pick! State Your Case! Every night of the week and twice on Saturdays the fairground exhortations announce ITV's giveaway programmes. Night after night viewers hug their sets to watch other people reap the rewards of skill or knowledge. On the lowest level the rewards go to an aptitude for fatuous party games (*Beat the Clock!*) or a knowledge of popular songs (*Spot the Tune!*); on the highest, for really abstruse knowledge in specialised fields (*The 64,000 Question*). In *State Your Case!* viewers decide which of three claimants has the best use for the weekly prize of £100. In *Make Up Your Mind!* competitors choose between the prize objects (anything from electric irons to antique thumb-screws) or sums of money. If their valuation is correct, they not only win the money prize, but pass on to a still more valuable prize-object. For the rest, the competitions are mostly quizzes of old-fashioned general knowledge, the easier of the 1001 Things Every Boy Should Know.

The popularity of these programmes must to a large extent consist in the vicarious pleasure of seeing someone getting something for nothing, the fulfilment of dreams of quick and easy cash. In *The 64,000 Question*, of course, the money is far from easy; and here the pleasure must partly be the morbid excitement of seeing the disappointment of those who fail on the last laps. Everything is presented so as to heighten the emotional excitement attending a win or loss; shots of people in the audience have titles like 'Her Father', 'Her Sister' superimposed on them, for example. *The 64,000 Question* has the outstanding advantage of very large prizes. £3,000 may just be enough to alter a winner's whole life. It might certainly make it worth while to take a year over full-time study of a particular subject, if only one could be sure the programme would still be running at the end of that time.

No other giveaway programme can compare with this in the value of its regular prizes. Generally they are in money (10/- to £50 or so) or in kind, from derisive offerings like half a pound of sausages to television sets, refrigerators and electric mixers. Only occasionally—with flurries of publicity—have prizes extended to cars and, once, a rather undesirable house. (The domestic character of the prizes is significant; at least two of the competitions are only open to married couples.) *Bury Your Hatchet!* offers a novel, rather unpleasant prize. Participants are pairs of people with some kind of petty grudge (e.g. he sniffles; she uses cheap perfume). The winner in a simple test of general knowledge is awarded, along with a cash prize, a signed recantation from the loser (I will not sniffle for six months/I will let him sniffle for six months, etc.).

Apart from the obvious vicarious enjoyment of these varied prizes, it is difficult to account for the tremendous popularity of these programmes. It cannot entirely be the old Wilfred Pickles' formula of 'presenting the people to the people'; because competitors are often subjected to personality-selling question-masters. Nor does the popularity of the question masters themselves seem sufficient explanation. It would be agreeable to attribute the success to a healthy instinct of curiosity, a hunger for more solid fare than the usual emasculated variety and boiled-down rep; but it would be untrue. At the very best, this bandying of unconnected bits of information only represents another form of that 'fragmentation' which Richard Hoggart describes: *the 'dolly-mixtures' pleasures of a constant diet of snippets of unrelated scrappy facts.*

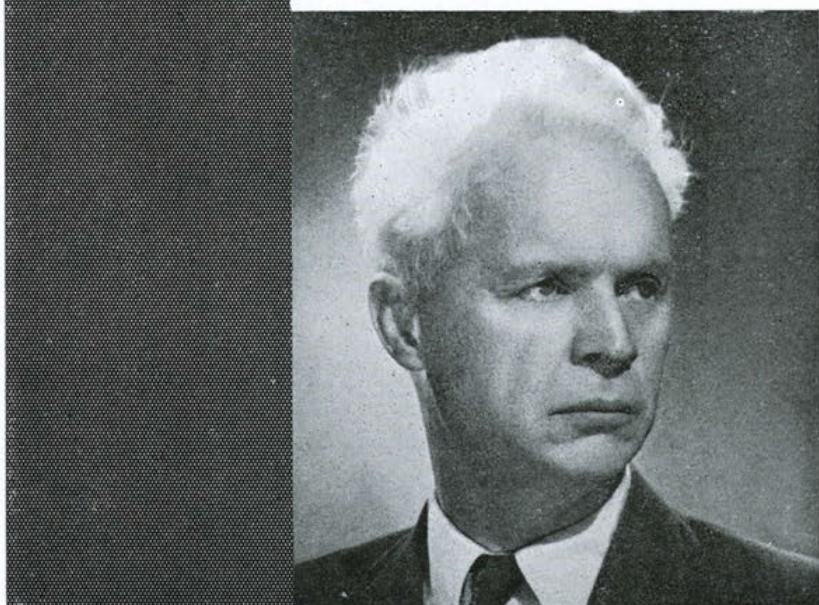
Prizes up to £3,000 for feats of idiocy or displays of abstruse accumulated knowledge; completely unrealistic values placed on samplings of deep research, or general knowledge which should be at every fool's command, or skills it seems almost shameful to admit to. The phenomenon would hardly be of more than passing interest, if it did not take pride of place in every evening's transmissions, and swallow up forty million hours of viewers' time a week. There must be an explanation; one only dreads discovering it.

DAVID ROBINSON.



DOVZHENKO —

poet
of life
eternal



by

IVOR MONTAGU

LAST year Dovzhenko died. With him passed the last of the great triumvirate of Soviet silent cinema, the men who, above all others, waked the world to the infinitudes of cinema and shook the wisecracks' indifference to its art.

What manner of man was he? The official obituary is loquacious but not very precise: "talented, tireless, eminent, ardent, brave and stern".

I only met him once. I remember him as of medium height, slim and erect, handsome, white-haired, extremely dignified and giving the impression of tremendous reserve power, intense inner life. Certainly he was the least expansive, the least 'knowable' of the three. Pudovkin wore his heart on his sleeve and could bubble about everyone, including Eisenstein. Eisenstein could tease Pudovkin and be ribald about everyone, except Dovzhenko. Dovzhenko everyone respected.

He came late to cinema—not merely later in date (his early masterpiece *Earth* was three or four years later than theirs, respectively *Mother* and *Potemkin*), but later in age. He was 32 years old, when, after a sleepless night from reading left-wing scribbles who said that painting was 'finished', he up and—so he tells us—abandoned palette and mahlstick and set off with his suitcase for Vufku, the studio of Ukraine-Films.

Was he really a painter? No, it seems not. He had already done a Gauguin in taking to painting. Dovzhenko was born on the farm, in Sosnitsa, a village of the Chernigov region, in the year 1894, his parents illiterate middle-peasants. "His childhood and youth," says the obituary, "were spent in the Ukrainian village, the scene of his best writing and films". For such a child, in such an era, schooling cannot have been easy. But he got it, he even got to a Commercial Institute, where, he said, he switched from biology to economics to technology, until "I came to my senses and had done with the whole thing". Next, a spell in the ranks of the Red Army, chasing the Poles out of his beloved Ukraine. Next, government service—a spell at education, a spell at the reconstruction of Kharkov, a spell of diplomacy (in the embassies of Warsaw and Berlin)—and then, suddenly, a brief try at painting and no less sudden switch to films.

Was he, indeed, a film man? He achieved the highest decorations and titles available in his profession: Order of Lenin, Order of the Red Banner, Order of the Red Banner of Labour, People's Artist of the U.S.S.R., Honoured Art Worker of the Ukrainian S.S.R. Yet even after he made *Earth* he could note that he was thinking of changing once more and devoting himself to literature. (He did write moving, passionate short stories during war-time, and his film *Michurin* was first written as a play.) And he could declare: "I have never considered myself as merely a professional director".

How to explain this last point? He himself offered the following explanation: "I enjoy writing scenarios—for what I particularly like is the birth of an idea. Working from somebody else's script is not very agreeable to me. It is like doing a painting from another's sketch. It is obvious that I cannot present my own point of view through the script of another".

His own point of view. There's the rub. Dovzhenko was a creator and in every one of his films he was expressing his own view, his own apprehension of life. There are few really creative artists in the whole film canon—creative, that is, in the sense of particular, original, individual content and outlook. There are plenty of originals in respect of trimmings.

Pudovkin was a film dramatist, expressing the poignancy of the given conflicts in true cinematic terms; but when the subject of the drama was weak in poignancy or petty, the drama could be empty. Eisenstein was the supreme scientist

and technician, expressing a comment on the given concepts in perfectly devised language of rhythm and image; but when the matter of the concepts was alien, and the treatment a mere exercise, the comment could be sterile. Dovzhenko records that his first cameraman said to him: "Never accept compromise". Dovzhenko never made a film without packing it to bursting with his own view of life.

Cinema is an art compounded of many of the arts. A creative genius in one aspect may be an interpretative genius in another. Film 'greats' include craftsmen as well as artists. The boundaries waver and dissolve, and aesthetics is so full of subjective terms, aesthetic analysis so hard to communicate precisely, that my point may become clearer if I pursue these comparisons. Lubitsch was no creator—he was an ingenious craftsman, a master of the narrative technique of comic drama; in content he created nothing and merely echoed the conventions of his youth. Stroheim, by contrast, had something to say; though his view was sardonic and limited, it yet corresponded to and revealed a certain element in human nature. Chaplin, besides his mastery of dramatic craft, is the most generous creator in the catalogue; his Dickensian gallery of characters portrays a view of life, broad and humane. In *Monsieur Verdoux* he is making a highly individual statement: the scene between the benignly experimenting killer and the girl of the streets he has chosen as expendable because she has nothing logically to live for, when she stuns him with her paean—nevertheless—to life triumphant, is perhaps the noblest original work in cinema's sixty years. But the creation is literary; it is plain, direct and in prose. What Dovzhenko had to say was not only said in terms of situation, but (in one film and in the greatest passages of the others) was perfectly blended in drama, composition, image, rhythm—that is, perfectly adapted to the medium in which it was expressed. And its content was not only patent, direct, but latent, deep, poetic. Meaning, and emotive effect too, lay not only in surface appearance but in the linked associations with which the whole was loaded. Vigo too was certainly a poet; overtones and mysteries cling to the overt matter of his films, but their depths are swirling, intangible, unplumbed. The uniqueness of Dovzhenko lies in the fact that he was not only a creator who chose the film as a medium, not only a poet, but that the matter of his creation—the vision of the beauty and eternity of life, the identity of death and life and so the ever-



"Arsenal"



"Earth": "... the sum of his films is beauty and glory ..."

repeated triumph of the newly born—became (as soon as his first daring stumbles and tumbles in the medium had given place to mastery) assured, pellucid, crystal clear.

For this, indeed, was his message and all his work was pregnant with it. His *oeuvre* consists of seven finished works and one incomplete. *Zvenigora* (1927), *Arsenal* (1928), *Earth* (1930), *Ivan* (1932), *Aerograd* (1936), *Shchors* (1939), *Michurin* (1948) and *Poem of a Sea*, the work on which he was engaged at the time of his death. The obituary notice to which I have referred calls them "artistic events, raising complex themes of contemporaneity, enriching the expressive means of cinema, arousing intense interest and hot discussion". All true enough, but yet beside the point. However complex the theme, he reduced it—that is perhaps the wrong word, exalted might be better—let us say, anyway, refined or distilled it to the simple essence that he saw pervading all life, contemporaneity as well as past, future—and hence his inflexible optimism—as well as now.

2

When he made *Zvenigora*, it was the first time that he had his own way, wrote his own scenario, directed the film he wrote. He knew next to nothing about what could be done in films, what one can or cannot get away with, and he was only feeling out his own powers of expression. The result was an inspired mess. *Arsenal*, too, was beset with clumsiness and crudity and brilliant eloquence. The third film was the masterpiece. After that he remained the master. His genius flashed and scintillated but it never quite attained the same perfection and rightness in the work as a whole.

"Hot discussion": yes, within his own country and outside it. Within, the pundits could perceive and approve his love of country as a son of the Ukraine; the poetic message they could only sense. Feeling its power, outside their narrow range, mistaking for pantheism its truly dialectical perception of the one-ness and continuity of the universe, the puritans and careerists, alarmed, were nervous. Without, that same passionate love of man and all nature was misunderstood, and applauded, as a sign of indifference towards the contemporary struggle or the standards of the artist's socialist homeland, a sign that he was not *engagé*.

Nothing could have been more false. This artist was the most *engagé* of all the talents in all Soviet art. Not only was he *engagé* in his love of homeland; all but two (*Aerograd* and *Michurin*) of his major films deal with the Ukraine as

subject*, and the other two include Ukrainian characters. Not only was he *engagé* in his concrete approach to its problems. But above all he was *engagé* in the actual field, with bullets and machine-guns. He fought at Kiev after the First World War, he fought again in the Second World War, and the long gap in his iconography covers active service, the stories, written red-hot, of what he saw, and fiery documentary compilations on his country's battle and liberation. (*A propos*, he delivered himself of an aphorism that some of our own most talented—and brittle—workers in that genre might take usefully to heart: "I cannot remain indifferent to documents. One must love much and strongly, and hate—otherwise one's works will remain dogmatic and dry".)

How did this double misunderstanding, the two faces of one coin, arise? Simply, because Alexander Dovzhenko was a poet, seeking to simplify everything to the simplest, basic feeling. The typical *engagé* familiar to the critics, either in the U.S.S.R. or, jackal-like, waiting outside to pounce, is plain, a man of surface, not only dogmatic and dry, but didactic and too often dull as well. But Dovzhenko was not like that; as with other *engagés*, the "documents" (realistic subjects) of his films were intended to be "typical", but (he wrote), "at times this documentation is concentrated to an ultimate degree; at the same time I project it through a prism of the emotions, which gives it life and, sometimes, eloquence".

As the spectators of his films were seized by these emotions, cut to the quick by a scalpel that touched the very roots of the nerves, given excruciating pain simultaneously with a pervasive sense of optimism and joy, they were aware that

* *Zvenigora*: a film with blended allegorical and contemporary elements, combining the past and revolutionary present of the Ukraine. *Arsenal*: completely a political film. "In making it I set myself two tasks: to unmask reactionary Ukrainian nationalism and chauvinism and to be the bard of the Ukrainian working class that had accomplished the social revolution" (Alexander Dovzhenko, *sic*). *Earth*: "the state of the Ukrainian village in 1924, that is, at a period not only of economic transformation, but also of mental transformation of the whole people" (A.D. *sic*). In the three films together "I show our country—its history, its way of life, its struggle and ideas" (A.D. *sic*). *Ivan*: the building of the Dneiper dam and the change thereby effected in the human beings who participated. *Shchors*: biography of a leader, the partisan struggle against counter-revolution following the first world war. *Poem of a Sea*: the transformation of a part of the Ukrainian countryside into an inland sea.



"Arsenal": widow of the revolution.



"Earth": "... death as a sacrifice ... a part of the unending process of reviving life".

they were being influenced on several levels at once; and so some reached the cheap suspicion—approving or disapproving according to their political bent—that beneath the revolutionary surface "document" lay a consciously introduced, smuggled, primary interest, nature-worship, eroticism or the like. Nothing could have been more remote from the truth. I doubt whether Dovzhenko consciously knew or could have explained what he was doing, any more than Shelley could have written for us on a blackboard the 'how' of being a poet. Dovzhenko himself tells us: "As far as I was concerned, there were no questions of style or form involved. I worked like a soldier who fights the enemy, without thought of rules or theory. I dare say if I had been asked then what I was thinking about, I should have answered, like Courbet to a lady's question, 'Madame, I am not thinking—I am excited'."

3

For the key to all the poignancy in Dovzhenko's films is death. Just that, the simplest thing of all. Death apprehended never as an end, a finish, dust to dust. But death as a sacrifice, the essential one, a part of the unending process of reviving life. It is the open secret understood by our first ancestors, when first, as man, they ceased to be animals and became conscious of the universe. The root of being, and not only ours. The basis of all culture. *The Golden Bough*. The Corn King and the Spring Queen. The most precious and most honoured, who is slain that the crops may grow for all. The Cross and the Resurrection. From the dead lion, honey. From the graveyard, roses. The seed sprouting in the fallen forest giant. From dust, sap. The silver lining in the cloud. The omelette from the broken eggs. No empty cycle, but the hope and certainty, because the inescapable method, in fact the *ritual* of progress. A poet of death, as part and parcel of eternal life.

Pantheism? No. Nature worship? Not at all. Sound Marxist dialectic: the union of opposites.

Dovzhenko's films are crammed with deaths. No artist in any medium has torn more rawly at the heart-strings. But no death in Dovzhenko was ever futile. Every one is essential. No *oeuvre* was ever more remote from the smell of the charnel-house. The sum of his films instead is beauty and glory. He is saying to the widow: "Glory in your children", and to the childless widow: "Glory in all the children of man".

Most perfectly is this seen in his masterpiece, *Earth*. Many others tried their hand at the tractor—the tractor as the symbol resolving the conflicts in the village, endowing

prosperity, defeating dark, imparting light. So did Dovzhenko. But what happens on the eve of its arrival? The youthful chairman, embodying all that is enlightened, courageous, good-humoured and noble, is returning to his home late at night with all troubles overcome, the waitings, the disappointments, the frustrations, the enemies. In his home his bride awaits him, life-companion of body and soul. It is a hot summer night. All nature couples. The birds in the trees, the beasts in the undergrowth. In sultry air, the cattle low in their stalls, and the bride writhes on her couch. On the path, suddenly, the chairman, for joy of living, starts to dance. He flexes his arms, he lifts his knees, his legs shoot out, and at that moment a bullet cuts through the moonlight and strikes him down. Could theme be more poignantly incarnated? Could subtlety be more lucid in its assault on the unconscious? Yes, perhaps. In the wondrous concluding image of the same film: the old grandfather, slowly, peacefully dying, merging into the harvest, before the untroubled eyes of a tow-head, snub-nosed infant and beside a mound, a plenitude, a Himalaya of apples.

But the like is everywhere in Dovzhenko's work. In the very first film, *Zvenigora*, amid the mish-mash of slow-motion hetmen and Varangians, the Polish marauders and monks' treasures, midsummer magic and decadent slaving of the West, the same power illumines the scene with a sudden lightning-flash. The ancient grandfather has two grandsons, a good and a bad. Here it is not the bad, the betrayer, it is the good, the saviour, who is the slayer of the sacrifice, but its fruits are the same. As he rides to war, his beloved pursues him barefoot from the village and clutches at his saddlebow. She clings and pleads—if you must go, do not leave me; kill me rather. He leans down and embraces her, then takes his firearm from his shoulder. In one terrible, simple frame we see from his viewpoint the pleading, loving woman; the ear of our imagination hears the rifle-crack, and down, down on to the sunlit earth she slumps to meet her own shadow. In the next, he rides to win liberty.

Aerograd contrasts with *Zvenigora* because, no less allegorical, it is the work of a master-craftsman. Gone is the floundering amateur. The fantastic elements are so perfectly controlled and balanced as to create a new nature, and almost to deceive a spectator unfamiliar with the symbolisation into supposing he is viewing happenings on a solely realistic plane. "*Aerograd*" is that "city we hope to build one day on the shores of the Pacific Ocean". Throughout the film the Chukchi, a young huntsman from the Stone Age and the Polar Circle, is making his way through the *taiga*, the dense forest jungle that stretches right across the

European-Asian land mass from Norway to Vladivostok and is at its wildest in Siberia. Here the price of victory in the film is not one life but three, and two of the slain part from the world with awesome solemnity. The struggle is between frontier guards and huntsmen and their families on the one hand, and on the other Japanese infiltrators and Ahriman himself, obscurantism and darkness symbolised in a community of Old Believers.

The very opening of the film portrays a clash in a clearing and a Japanese survivor fleeing, floundering, stumbling, panting, through streams, over logs, clutched by brambles, felled by branches, "for dear life", as they say, until at last he can no more, and tattered and with bursting lungs he turns, unarmed, to face his pursuer. Fishing his spectacles from his pocket and putting them on to see the better at close range, the Japanese, hopeless, asks: "Am I going to die?" and the pursuing guard, a benign, bearded, burly demi-god of the woods, all gentleness and twinkling eyes, nods his head. The climax of the film shows the hidden betrayer unmasked as the partisan comrade of that same frontier guard, a tiger-hunter no less broad, burly and wood-wise, an *alter ego*, a forest brother in all but the spirit. Without a word between them, the guard sets off into the *taiga* depths and the betrayer, disarming himself, follows at a few paces, accepting the inevitable. At last the frontier guard stops, turns round in a clearing, takes his rifle off his shoulder. His friend, arms dangling like some bear of the forest, suddenly starts to roar. The voice ululates and rings till the rifle-crash cuts it short. It is as though life were so precious that the man about to die sought by the echoes of his cry to prolong existence even beyond the rifle-bullet.

The third death, that of a noble young Chinese partisan, completes the sacrifice. As his body is loaded on to a light plane, it seems as though all the aircraft in the world were headed across the Euro-Asian land mass to the Pacific; and as our Chukchi reaches the coast he finds no city built with houses, but Soviet power, sailors, airmen, guardsmen, in spickness impeccable paraded to await him. "Where is Aerograd?" he asks. "I am come to study at the university". And, as he takes in the smiling faces around, the Stone Age man answers himself with a smile: "I see. We are to build it ourselves".

Shchors is the Ukrainian equivalent of Chapayev, but whereas the latter was the partisan hero to Furmanov's commissar, here the uncouth popular figure is Bozhenko and it is his Jonathan and mentor, the ex-student Shchors, who

falls. Again, the apotheosis is an unforgettable scene in which the partisan band, in the midst of battle and with machine-guns raging around them, bear aloft in single file the body of the beloved commissar against the background of a burning village, its cottages flaming like funeral torches.

In *Michurin*, the stubborn tree-breeder, with the troubles of Job on his head, faces every conceivable obstacle, frustration and disappointment. To cap it all, his wife, his one comfort and stay, the one being beside himself who believed, dies of a long illness. Michurin steps out into the night. It is an extraordinary imaginative effect, as Dovzhenko, in this, his first colour film, makes Michurin pass from a normal colour scene into blackness, a darkness beset with howling wind and drifting autumn leaves, a horror of death and loneliness and nullity matching and reinforcing the blackness in his soul. But this loss is again a prelude to an issue, leading to a finale of blossom and children and triumph. Even Dovzhenko's strictly literary creation is drenched in the same theme. No one, not even Sholokhov, has rendered more vividly the desperate chaos of defeat on the banks of the Ukrainian rivers in 1941, from which were reborn the partisan forces that slashed the ham-strings of Hitler's panzer army and brought it to the ground.

4

I take this opening dialogue from the scenario of the film which Dovzhenko was completing when he died. The 'I' of the scenario is travelling by river-steamer, and is accosted by an old friend he has not seen for years:—

"A penny for your thoughts."

"To tell the truth, I'm thinking about nothing," I answer him. "Or, rather, about everything."

"Are you thinking of home?"

"I'm thinking of life. I've completely given myself up to feeling. I've been thinking: how lovely the world is, and how lovely is life. And why do people feel that so seldom?"

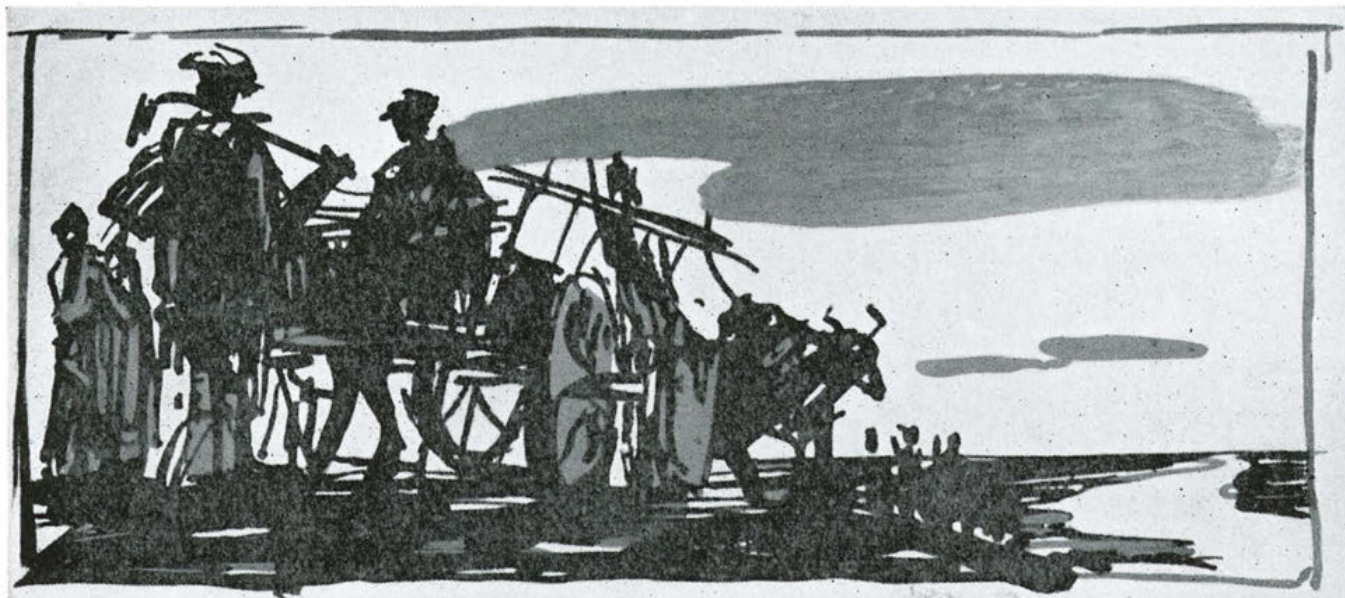
"Yes, this river stimulates thought. I, too, as we float on and on, let myself be carried away . . . Its waters flow by . . . You're going . . .?"

"I want to go home. To the village where I was born."

But there is no home. This village is inundated, drowned. And above it is born an inland sea, nourishing and giving life to the earth for miles around, a junction of the waters bringing contact by canal with seven oceans.

Thus this unmatched poet of the cinema wrings our entrails with his vision of the universal truth.

Art directors' design for "Poem of a Sea", executed by A. Borisov and I. Plastinkin under the direction of Dovzhenko.





Max Ophüls, with Maria Felix, on the set of "Lola Montès".

Max Ophüls

Max Ophüls died on 26th March. We publish these personal tributes from friends and colleagues who worked with him in France and in the United States.

MAX Ophüls was in love with the theatre, in the most comprehensive sense of the word; not the theatre with a capital T, not "the entertainment industry", more what we call "show business". He loved actors, technicians, stage hands, impresarios. He was fascinated by the makeshift, the charlatanism, the sordid materialism of our operation almost as much as by our dreamworld at its finest.

He was the resilient nomad whose humour twinkled in the most unpromising circumstances, even when perhaps he could not clearly foresee which continent would offer his next assignment.

A reunion with Max was a pick-me-up. One could look forward to becoming recharged by exposure to this humour, and to his enthusiasms and his insatiable curiosity.

Once when I was privileged to introduce him to the Film Institute I perpetrated this affectionate criticism:

*I think I know the reason why
Producers tend to make him cry,
Inevitably they demand
Some stationary set-ups, and*

*A shot that does not call for tracks
Is agony for poor dear Max,
Who, separated from his dolly
Is wrapped in deepest melancholy.
Once, when they took away his crane,
I thought he'd never smile again.*

In Hollywood on the completion of a film called *The Reckless Moment* we held a farewell party during the course of which souvenirs, mostly of a facetious nature, were awarded to the leaders of the troop. The camera crew saw fit to give Max a child's doll transfixed by an arrow. This was a symbol of the "dolly shot" to which Max was incurably addicted.

His friends would rib him about this particular enthusiasm, and I do not believe that the professional critics, try as they might, ever legitimately registered a less trifling complaint.

He was a true artist and a very dear friend. This was a man of the theatre.

JAMES MASON

FOR the technicians who liked to work with him, making a film with Max Ophüls was an exceptional experience. We knew that no effort would be spared; we also knew that, with him, we would find the answer to any sort of problem, whether technical or artistic. His imagination would often conceive ideas quite beyond the usual restricted possibilities of film production; but when he thought up some apparently impossible *prises de vues*, no one ever doubted that the results would be perfectly all right. His unit (formed for *La Ronde*) retained the same confidence in him right up to his last film, *Lola Montès*.

When Ophüls turned here to the use of colour and CinemaScope, it was with new and personal conceptions. He adapted his own highly characteristic style to the new techniques with complete assurance, and in so doing enriched the modern methods of film-making.

Photographs of Max Ophüls on the set have generally shown him in his favourite attitudes, which were those of an orchestral conductor. Attentive to every detail, fully aware of all the complex elements of the art at his disposal, he imposed himself with authority. His personal influence was everywhere; he was "The Master". From the people who worked with him, he required complete sincerity; and as far as I was concerned, he demanded that the ambience of the scene should always find its reflection in the lighting style. Every tiny ray of light had its importance for him.

His work remains unfinished; and we mourn one of the great film artists of our time—a friend whom we loved as much as we admired him. He was one of those people who know how to give a meaning, a value, a *raison d'être* to every human enterprise.

CHRISTIAN MATRAS

I WORKED a great deal with Max Ophüls. We wrote *De Mayerling à Sarajevo* together, and later *La Ronde*, *Le Plaisir* and a new version of *Mam'zelle Nitouche* which was never made because Max wanted it to be extremely lavish. ("Otherwise", he said, "there's no point in my making it. Any other director would do". And he was not wrong.) And then *Lola Montès*. Finally, just before I left Paris—and the cinema—he had succeeded, by a mixture of obstinacy and persuasiveness, in making me agree to do a little work on *Montparnos*, which, alas, he never made.

I only recall all this to show that I knew him over a long period, and well; and I knew what he thought. Our long friendship was not exempt from quarrels—"final quarrels"—which generally occurred towards the end of the script, when fatigue strains even friendship to the limit. Of course, these final quarrels never lasted long.

Yes, I knew what Ophüls thought; and latterly it was this: that *Lola Montès*, so controversial in Paris, would triumph in London and New York just as *La Ronde* and *Le Plaisir* had

done. He said so; he repeated it; he was confident of it. He will not be there, unhappily, to see whether he was right.

The death of Alexander Korda had upset him very much. "To die so young", he said, "that's horrible". Poor Max...

JACQUES NATANSON

MANY people thought that Max Ophuls was Viennese. He was not. He was simply a man of German formation and background who thought that the French at their airiest were often intolerably heavy. Never content with subtleties, he searched for shades of subtleties, and then for nuances in these shades. Some directors are painters in celluloid, others sculptors, others butchers; Max was a distiller.

His mind and his means of self-expression were sensuous, he chased and captured fragrances, and the actor was often reduced to a cloistered being on tiptoe who could hardly breathe for fear of blowing away some precious cobweb which had its vital symbolical meaning. He would cut a scene because he found the flicker of an eyelid excessive, as tactless as a fanfare at a funeral. At the same time he was far from being solemn about his researches into the unspoken which sometimes took his actors perilously near the unfelt. He did not laugh at himself, he roared.

His giggle was as healthy as that of a child whose sense of humour is awakened for the first time, and as uncontrolled as a schoolgirl's. Tears would come to his eyes, and he would be forced to sit down in order to recover. At times he would bark at his crew as a conventional Prussian officer might, his perfect French deformed by his urgent desire for obedience. I only had to harden my eyes and allow my cheek the minutest twitch of Junker madness for him to collapse in a gale of laughter. He loved satire, especially at the expense of the Germans and the French, and he still remembered with joy the

reaction of one of his relatives, a shrewd tailor, to the outbreak of war in 1914. Some German cavalry regiments of the time wore black trousers with a red stripe down the side. The day before hostilities broke out, the tailor gave instructions for red stripes to be attached to all the black trousers in his establishment, adding his opinion that "it will last at least four years".

The wisdom of this man and the stupidity of those generals on both sides who talked about being home for Christmas was just the kind of mordant paradox which appealed to Max's broad and often savage sense of humour. Personally I regret that this aspect of his natural talent was all too rarely allowed to infiltrate into his films, as it was invariably damped by some elusive aesthetic considerations.

He was not easy to work for, he was even more difficult to work under, but he was infinitely rewarding to work with. Dispute and argument he enjoyed almost as much as laughter, and although he was a bit of a dictator, he disliked and mistrusted servility.

His work has been described as baroque, but that suggests a kind of glorious extraversion, a passionate abandon. He was the most introspective of directors, a watchmaker intent on making the smallest watch in the world, and then, with a sudden flash of perversity, putting it up on a cathedral. His technique was fabulous, his visual imagination opulent, but his basic ideas volatile, ephemeral, secret, microscopic.

The film industry has lost one of its most interesting directors. His personality was too strong to please everybody. To the occasional horror of financiers, and to the frequent delight of filmgoers, he believed a studio to be not so much an emporium as a place in which a latterday Benvenuto Cellini could fashion his fancies in peace and quiet, with hardly a thought of the rent.

PETER USTINOV

Book Reviews

THE DEER PARK, by Norman Mailer. (Allan Wingate, 15/-).

THIS IS NOT what is generally called a "Hollywood novel". It describes a few weeks at Desert D'Or, a resort in Southern California invaded mainly by inhabitants of the movie colony in search of rest and pleasure, as a freshly demobilised young Air Force hero stumbles upon it. He has won \$14,000 in a poker game and decides to stay. He is an orphan, he has no place to go, he wants vaguely to be a writer, he refuses to allow a movie to be made about his war exploits, he has an affair with a young star, he becomes a friend of a famous director temporarily under a political cloud, he spends all his money, goes to live in a cold-water flat in New York where he opens a bullfighting school and reads voraciously, meets a fading nightclub star from Desert D'Or and is kept by her for a couple of weeks, then settles down alone to the business of writing with "the intolerable conviction that I could write about worlds I knew better than anyone alive".

No doubt the epigraph from Gide, *Please do not understand me too quickly*, warns against any summary of the novel's intentions. All the same, Mailer appears to be showing his corrupt Californian pleasure community through the eyes of a relative innocent; it provides a confusing but vivid halt on his road to maturity. One side of Sergius is drawn to Desert D'Or, its ease and wealth and sexual enticements, the other rejects it. The values are too false and promiscuity destroys love. Unfortunately he never really involves Sergius closely enough with this world. There are long

sections of the book in which the "I" is dropped and the dramas continue without the narrator. This creates a feeling of dislocation and distance as far as Sergius' development is concerned. He is in fact something of a humourless wisecracker who develops little except a taste for the Great Abstracts—"the longest individual journey may well be the path from the first creative enthusiasm to the concluded artifact", etc.—and because his relation to events is never properly clinched the point of view and focus of the whole remains uncertain.

Although *The Deer Park* is a book without a steady centre and falls into portentousness here and there, it has some striking and brilliant passages. Mailer clearly knows some aspects of Hollywood very well. The portrait of Eitel, the film director, is fascinating. Though rather too much time is expanded on his dragging love affair with what the blurb rightly describes as "a strange girl called Elena Esposito", he is a successful study in depth. There is much shrewd and frightening observation of political pressures and investigation methods, and this unhappy, talented man remains the most vivid and sympathetic character in the book. An equally good portrait in a different way is the revolting studio executive Herman Teppis. This power-figure not only tries to interfere with the private lives of his contract stars (a pity, by the way, that the revelation of Teddy Pope's homosexuality is in such facile melodramatic terms), but displays in every sphere of life a mixture of viciousness, sentimentality, cynicism and drooling 'spiritual' pretention that is hideously authentic. Particularly good is his attitude to the public:

You know the trouble? People are confused today. So what do they want? They want a picture that confuses them. Wait till they get really confused. Then they'll want a picture that sets them straight.

One knows Norman Mailer's talent from *The Naked and the Dead*. In parts of this book it is again impressively working. Apart from a tendency to Make the Important Statement here and there, perhaps the reason why it is unsatisfactory as a whole is that he gets closer to his characters when the narrator is absent. In some of the best scenes involving Eitel and Teppis, Sergius hardly appears. In fact his conviction that he can write about worlds he knows better than anyone alive becomes intolerable when you realise Norman Mailer can write about them better.

GAVIN LAMBERT.

$$F(m)^x \approx B(m)^x$$

The still on the right is a "pertinent illustration" of this fundamental formula which, according to M. Lo Duca*, dominates film production. F-female; m-male; B-flex (*bandent*); and m-muscles. Thus: females hovering amidst innumerable males who are flexing their muscles. The formula, M. Duca asserts, is ambivalent, and the terms can be inverted without changing the results.

Fortunately, however, this formula, and an incredible two-colour graph illustrating the degree of intensity of the erotic qualities in the "ten great love films", constitute the only pretensions of *L'Erotisme au Cinéma*, Lo Duca's agreeable if unreliable picture book. The pictures are divided into appropriate sections: Mythology of the Breast, Hypertrophy of the Breast, The Bed, The Nude, The Reign of Satin, Fetishism, Sadism, Narcissism, Necrophilia and The Corset.

Something, in fact, for everyone. M. Lo Duca is not here a "committed" critic; he is not concerned with approbation or condemnation and assures us that he has made great attempts at objectivity. Ado Kyrrou's *Amour-Erotisme et Cinéma*†, on the other hand, is very much "committed": he wants more and better sex on the screen. M. Kyrrou is a disciple of the surrealist André Breton and seems to have been miraculously endowed with the same sensibility as his master, if not perhaps the same degree of intelligence. For whereas Breton, like Kyrrou, declares himself (in *L'Amour Fou*, 1938) incapable of deriving any pleasure from a work of art "that does not give him the same erotic shiver as that caused by a feather lightly brushing his temple", he is catholic enough to include Pascal, *The Divine Comedy* and *Paradise Lost* among his list of 112 "Desert Island Books" (in *Pour Une Bibliothèque Idéale*, 1956). If Breton can find it in himself to like *Paradise Lost*, surely Kyrrou ought to be able to appreciate Bresson.

For Kyrrou, the role of the cinema is to "deflower Christian bourgeois civilisation"; he considers the cinema particularly apt to portray "the splendid grandeur of the sexual act", which will accomplish the afore-mentioned deflowering. Because: the cinema has been compared with dreams; love is at the root of all dreams; therefore, the cinema is love.

He then advances a variety of sociological and psychological reasons to explain why there isn't enough sex in the cinema. One may be somewhat inclined to discount these theories when one encounters passages like the following:

I cannot remember ever having seen any film dealing with the terrifying social injustice which deprives young and beautiful girls of the jewels that ought by right to be theirs, but gives them to sinister old ladies with triple chins.

And:

Since there are a great many nuns in Italy, it is natural that they must be desired by Italian men. Now we have many films which show prostitutes ending up in convents. But the reverse is actually meant: the Italians would secretly like to see the nuns in brothels, so that they could then sleep with them without fear of celestial vengeance.

So much for sociology and psychology. Any remaining doubts the reader might have about M. Kyrrou's judgment may be settled when he learns that Kyrrou dislikes Barbara Stanwyck because she always seems to him to be a dried-up intellectual, but that he liked Betty Boop because she was a "poetic affirmation of beauty and love".

Since a large part of the book is devoted to a history of the cinema from M. Kyrrou's point of view, the reader may expect to see the subject in a new light: he will not be disappointed.

For example: Kyrrou likes *Broken Blossoms*, but thinks it would have been much better if Richard Barthelmess and Lillian Gish had slept together. Dreyer: he has an "undeniable cinematographic temperament" (whatever that may mean), but is a reactionary, aesthetic, Protestant director. Stroheim: his films leave Kyrrou cold; when he discovered that Stroheim was an active member of the Catholic screen writers' guild, he suddenly understood why Stroheim is heavy and boring, and why he is a "Christian masochist". Bresson: Kyrrou prefers Christian Jaque; he also prefers *The Robe* and *Samson and Delilah* to *Journal d'un Curé de Campagne*. The Italians: he prefers Sylvana Pampanini



Illustrating a formula: Jane Russell in "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes".

to Vittorio de Sica. England also comes out rather badly, as we might have expected. Three exceptions, however, are "l'école de Brighton", *The Purple Plain* ("très important film d'amour") and the "admirable" Elizabeth Allan.

If Dreyer, Stroheim and Bresson are out, who is in? Apart from Bunuel's *L'Age d'Or*, the two greatest love films (and therefore the two greatest films) are *Peter Ibbetson* (Henry Hathaway) and *One Way Passage* (Tay Garnett)!

On the other hand, the section of M. Kyrrou's book dealing with the evolution of the great female stars from Lyda Borelli to Marilyn Monroe is rather good, especially the section on Louise Brooks, that cult-object of the *fine fleur*, to whose career and private life he devotes many pages. He is also good on Mae West—"she is an earthquake, a tornado, an admirable scourge, a sky-rocket, a liberating explosion".

Unfortunately neither M. Kyrrou nor M. Lo Duca is particularly reliable, and both books contain a considerable number of factual errors. And both authors, finally, have some strange ideas about how film festival prizes are awarded. Lo Duca thinks that Lilli Palmer got her award solely because of her beautiful lips; Kyrrou thinks that *One Summer of Happiness* got its award solely because of the beautiful breasts of Ulla Jacobsson.

Goya said "the dream of reason produces monsters", but the Surrealist revolt against the cult of reason in France has also produced its monsters. M. Kyrrou starts from un-reason and then proceeds to apply his lunatic hypothesis in a highly ordered and logical way, so making perhaps the worst of both worlds.

To sum up: excellent summer light reading, if taken with a kilo of salt.

RICHARD ROUD.

BOOKS RECEIVED

THE LAW OF COPYRIGHT. By J. P. Eddy (Butterworths, 35s.)

KEMP'S FILM AND TELEVISION DIRECTORY, 1957. (Kemp's Commercial Guides Ltd., 10s 6d.)

PRESENCES CONTEMPORAINES: CINEMA. By Pierre Leprohon. (Editions Debresse, 1,440 frs.)

JAMES DEAN, OU LE MAL DE VIVRE. By Yves Salgues. (Pierre Horay, 660 frs.)

JEAN VIGO. By P. E. Sales Gomes (Editions du Seuil, 800 frs.)

IL NUOVO CINEMA ITALIANO. By Giuseppe Ferrara. (Le Monnier.)

IL TETTO, di Vittorio de Sica. Edited by Michele Gandin. (Cappelli, 1,500 lire.)

ELOKUVAN VUOSIKIRJA, 1957 (*Film Yearbook*, 1957). (Studio, Helsinki, 300 fmks.)

* *L'Erotisme au Cinéma*, by Lo Duca. Illustrated. (J-J. Pauvert, Paris, 2,200 fr.)

† *Amour-Erotisme et Cinéma*, by Ado Kyrrou. Illustrated. (Le Terrain Vague, Paris, 1,500 fr.)

Correspondence

Experimental Production Fund

The Editor, SIGHT AND SOUND

SIR,—May I, through the courtesy of your journal, give some information to your readers about an activity which I believe to be important to the future of British film-making: the work of the British Film Institute's Experimental Production Fund.

The Fund was set up with money voted by the film trade Associations from the pre-statutory British Film Production Fund at the time of the establishment of the National Film Theatre. It is administered by a Committee set up by the Governors of the British Film Institute. In the four years since its inception, the Committee has produced, or helped to produce, ten films—among them *The Door in the Wall*, *Indian Fantasy*, *Momma Don't Allow*, *Rowlandson's England*, *A Short Vision* and *Together*.

We continue to look for promising projects. Our normal procedure is, in the first instance, to consider outline treatments with an approximate budget: we prefer them to come from people with some amateur or professional knowledge of film production but this is not an invariable rule. Film-makers are not paid—we provide stock, equipment, facilities—but they share in the revenue from the films.

We are interested in genuinely experimental work but have no preference between experiments in style, technique or subject. The films may be made on 16 mm. or 35 mm. but ideas requiring elaborate technical means usually have to be rejected because of costs: potential applicants should bear this in mind.

I hope you will agree that the work of the Committee in finding and encouraging talented young film-makers is important and help us by bringing it to the notice of your readers.

Yours faithfully,

MICHAEL BALCON,
Chairman,
B.F.I. Experimental Production Fund.

Trinity College, Dublin

SIR,—Plans are being considered for the making of a short documentary film in colour about Trinity College, Dublin, where is the world-famous library containing the Book of Kells and other treasures. The film will be designed for commercial distribution but will also be available to viewers brought together for special screenings by graduates of Trinity in many parts of the world. The central purpose is to excite interest in the Library and thereby to enlarge the revenues from which the Library is sustained. It has become urgent to extend the facilities. The Library is a Copyright Centre.

All Trinity graduates who may be associated with or engaged in the film industry whether on production, distribution or publicity are desired to write to me as honorary secretary of the Trinity Graduates Film Advisory Council.

Yours faithfully,

80 Regents Park Road,
N.W.1.

LESLIE DAIKEN.

Critical Standards

SIR,—So far from thinking that Lindsay Anderson was too harsh, I feel that his strictures are both necessary and timely. What he describes is not a new development, but it does represent a situation which is rapidly deteriorating.

Frank Jackson's argument appears to be that the writer on films is the last person to be blamed, should indeed be the recipient of mercy rather than justice, because he has to produce the kind of material his editor deems suitable or lose his job. Although there may be some truth in this, and although I realise that there are editors, like judges, remote from the tastes of ordinary mortals, I do not think this is a major factor. There has been for some time an increasing tendency to regard writing about films as one of the easier and pleasanter ways of getting a journalistic livelihood, and

an increasingly casual attitude towards the cinema among those who write about it.

I date an acceleration in this decline from the time film criticism lost the late Richard Winnington, that shining example of how high a standard can be achieved even in the 'popular' press. He had the rare gift of being erudite without becoming obscure.

Winnington's secret lay in his passionate interest in films: he believed that this was essential in a critic. He was, it is true, an exceptionally talented man and outstanding as a writer, but it was his devotion to the art of the cinema which motivated him and brought these gifts to fruition. It was practically unknown for Dick Winnington to miss a showing whatever the time, place or circumstances, unknown for him to arrive late or leave before the end of a film.

He cared about films too intensely ever to take his job casually, and I would suggest that what causes critics to stoop to a cheap wisecrack in place of an appraisal, to behave temperamentally about attending press shows, to treat the cinema as having no relation to life or art, is not so much the attempt to appear bright journalists as the fact that they are not really interested in films. This Winnington regarded as the unforgivable sin in a critic. I think he was right.

Yours faithfully,

16 Tufnell Park Road,
N.7.

MONICA PEARSON.

Stanley Spencer

SIR,—As an art critic no less than as a native of the Clyde Valley, I hasten to correct Patrick Hayman's statement in "Art Films by John Read" that Stanley Spencer was a war artist on Tyneside in the Second World War. As is well known, Stanley Spencer made his shipyard pictures of Port Glasgow for the War Artists' Advisory Committee between 1940 and 1945. Preliminary drawings were made in Scotland and the painting was done at different places in the South.

While collecting material for his shipyard pictures in 1943 Spencer was also inspired by the sight of a cemetery in Port Glasgow to make drawings for his series of eight pictures on the theme of the Resurrection. This series was completed by the picture known as *The Resurrection: Port Glasgow* (1944-50) which is in the Tate Gallery.

Of the excellent films by John Read which I have seen screened at the British Council Cinema, I think that those on Spencer were easily the best, chiefly because of the artist's well-rounded character and his articulate conviction. But the documentary film about an artist is limited by chance regarding the work in progress—a matter of luck to catch a painter in the midst of urgent creation on a big canvas.

Yours faithfully,

62 (2) Thrale Road,
S.W.16.

G. S. WHITTET.

Documentary at Mannheim

SIR,—In your Spring issue under the title "Documentary at Mannheim", your correspondent imputes to me the following words: "Mannheim has become as important as Edinburgh".

In fact, I said that, in regard to Germany, Mannheim has become as important as Edinburgh in regard to the Anglo-Saxon world. Here is a faint difference which completely changes the meaning of the sentence. Everybody knows that the Edinburgh Festival lasts for three weeks and that in regard to documentary films its world-wide importance cannot be compared with any other festival.

Yours faithfully,

103 Rue de Livourne,
Brussels.

HENRI STORCK.

Humphrey Jennings

SIR,—I am conducting research in preparation for writing a study of the work of the late Humphrey Jennings (in the cinema, in painting, and in letters), and should be grateful to receive information, anecdotes and materials from any of your readers who may be able to assist.

All material will be copied and promptly returned.

Yours faithfully,

5 Zetland Road,
Mont Albert, E.10,
Victoria,
Australia.

J. K. MERRALLS.
New Melbourne Film Group.

BLACKLISTED *continued from page 19*

altogether opposed to the idea of "getting round" the blacklist. Dalton Trumbo, in a recent article in *The Nation*, goes so far as to claim that "the major studios were openly in the black market, purchasing plays and other material and releasing them without their authors' names". *Rififi* was shown freely and successfully in the States. *Friendly Persuasion*, applying the principle of anonymity, has had a considerable box-office success. It is significant that a \$50,000,000 suit, brought by Michael Wilson and some twenty others against Loew's Inc. for loss and damages incurred through the operation of a blacklist, comes up for hearing by the Supreme Court later this year. It is also, and encouragingly, significant that Carl Foreman this year returns to work, for the first time since *High Noon*, with an ambitious writer-producer schedule of films to be made in Britain. He has been able to achieve clearance on what have always been his terms—without, that is, "naming names"—and this in itself makes his something of a test case.

These are all straws in the wind, signs that, ten years after the initial hearings, the tensions are relaxing, the pressure to conform and to inform possibly slackening. In these ten black years, though, there has been plenty to justify the bitter and final comment made by *Variety* in reviewing John Cogley's book: "there are times when human nature never looked lousier".

Factual material in this article about the 1947 and 1951 hearings, the Committee for the First Amendment and the activities of the American Legion is closely based on *Report on Blacklisting*. Readers will also find here further details of how the blacklist has operated in individual cases.

UN CONDAMNE A MORT S'EST ECHAPPE

continued from page 33

in some externals: grey, dreamlike routine, claustrophobia, isolation of the spirit. Yet because of the central character, the effect is never merely passive. The sequences of Fontaine preparing his escape—the iron spoon scraping at crevices in the door, the pyjamas torn in strips and plaited round the bedsprings, the tell-tale shavings whisked out of sight as a guard approaches—are long and detailed and always exist on two levels. Behind the slow, pathetically improvised physical effort one senses the inner dedication. Bresson impregnates each action with faith. And for the first time he finds his most impressive moments in affirmation. The use of the Mass in C Minor by Mozart is a daring example. It accompanies sequences of the most drab routine—emptying of slops, the shuffles down the corridor—and transposes them to a key of pity and exaltation. For throughout this film is sounded a note, faint at first but growing louder, of the release to come.

Most remarkable of all are the closing scenes between Fontaine and Jost. They have an intimacy and implied tenderness that Bresson has never achieved before. With his worried, shifty expression, his hesitant answers and tactless questions, Jost is a wonderfully ambiguous character. Sometimes he has a strange innocence, at others one is sure he is corrupted. He is a test for Fontaine's human instincts. And the escape itself, losing none of its excitement because the film's title predicts the outcome, is also the occasion for a trust and attachment to grow up between them.

The actors are all non-professional, and all perfect. Fontaine is played by François Leterrier, formerly a student of philosophy at the Sorbonne. He has what one might call, after Claude Laydu, the "Bresson face": gentle, strong, with large deep eyes and a mysterious, sexless authority. A clear mirror, it reflects the loneliness, vision, occasional despair and ascetic humanity which lies at the heart of this extraordinary film.

GAVIN LAMBERT.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Stills:

WARNER BROTHERS for *The Prince and the Showgirl*, *A Face in the Crowd*, *The Spirit of St. Louis*, pictures of Elia Kazan.
PARAMOUNT PICTURES for *Funny Face*, *Fear Strikes Out*.
METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER for *A Man is Ten Feet Tall*.
UNITED ARTISTS for *Saint Joan*, *Bachelor Party*.
20th CENTURY-FOX for *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*.
RKO-RADIO PICTURES for *The Young Stranger*.
NATIONAL FILM ARCHIVE for *Arsenal*, *Earth*, *Housing Problems*, picture of Alexander Dovzhenko.
CENTRAL FILM LIBRARY for *Spare Time*.
UNIFRANCE for *Celui qui doit Mourir*, *Les Espions*, *Lola Montes*.
FILMS DE FRANCE for *Un Condamné à Mort s'est Echappé*.
MIRACLE FILMS for *Lost Continent*.
CONTEMPORARY FILM DISTRIBUTORS for *Friends for Life*.
VIDES FILM-CAS PRODUCTIONS for *Notti Bianchi*.
FILM POLSKI for *Kanal*.
DEFA for *Duped till Doomsday*.
ARGENTINA SONOFILM for *House of the Angel*.
SVENSK FILMINDUSTRI for *The Seventh Seal*.
LENFILM for *Don Quixote*.
SHELL FILM UNIT for *The Back of Beyond*.
MORSE FILMS for *People Apart*.
BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE EXPERIMENTAL PRODUCTION FUND for *Nice Time*.
FORD MOTOR COMPANY for *Every Day Except Christmas*.
ISSKUSTVO KINO for *Poem of a Sea*.
ASSOCIATED PRESS for pictures in *Blacklisted* article.

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A GUIDE TO CURRENT FILMS

Films likely to be of special interest to *SIGHT AND SOUND* readers are denoted by one, two or three stars.

ADMIRABLE CRICHTON, THE (Columbia) James Barrie's play about social status on a desert island now looks its age, and needs rather more delicate handling than it gets in this boisterous screen adaptation. (Kenneth More, Diane Cilento, Cecil Parker; director, Lewis Gilbert. Eastman Colour.)

AND WOMAN . . . WAS CREATED (Miracle) Brigitte Bardot's lusty charms upset the lives of two brothers in sunny San Tropez. Standard erotics, with a few pungent comments on marital relations. (Curd Jurgens, Jean-Louis Trintignant; director, Roger Vadim. CinemaScope, Eastman Colour.)

BEAU JAMES (Paramount) Based on a book by Gene Fowler, this romantic comedy-biography has Bob Hope as James Walker, the prohibition period mayor of New York. Fair wisecracks; some good New York locations. (Vera Miles, Paul Douglas; director, Melville Shavelson. VistaVision, Technicolor.)

BUSTER KEATON STORY, THE (Paramount) A somewhat degrading tribute to the great comedian, purporting to represent his private life (Scott-stained) and artistic career (sadly unflattering imitations by an ill-cast Donald O'Connor). (Ann Blyth, Peter Lorre; director, Sidney Sheldon. VistaVision.)

CARRY ON, ADMIRAL (Renown) Wide-screen adaptation of the Ian Hay-Stephen King-Hall naval farce *Off the Record*. Old-fashioned but breezy. (David Tomlinson, Brian Reece, A. E. Matthews; director, Val Guest. SpectaScope.)

***CINERAMA HOLIDAY** (Cinerama Productions) The long-running, large-screen travelogue has its striking and effective episodes, notably skiing in Switzerland and railroading in California. (Directors, Robert Bendick, Philippe de Lacey. Technicolor.)

*****CONDAMNE A MORT S'EST ECHAPPE, UN** (Films de France) Bresson's superbly austere and concentrated account of a prisoner of war escape, and the moral tensions behind the daring exploit. An extraordinary achievement by one of the cinema's most uncompromising talents. *Reviewed.* (François Leterrier.)

****FEAR STRIKES OUT** (Paramount) The story of a young baseball player dominated by his father, and finally finding release through psychoanalysis. Made with skill, feeling and intelligence by a new producer-director team from television and finely played by Anthony Perkins. (Karl Malden; director, Robert Mulligan. VistaVision.)

FIRE DOWN BELOW (Columbia) A serene Rita Hayworth plying between tropical islands in an effort to dodge a vivid past. Colourful shenanigans with a script attributed to Irwin Shaw. (Robert Mitchum, Jack Lemmon; director, Robert Parrish. CinemaScope, Technicolor.)

****FRIENDS FOR LIFE** (Contemporary) Franco Rossi's film is a delicate and elegant account of the friendship between two small boys, stylishly made and beautifully played. *Reviewed.* (Geronimo Meynier, Andrea Scire.)

GIRL HE LEFT BEHIND, THE (Warners) Spoilt boy tamed by the rough, rugged and demanding love offered him by the army. Flat playing by Tab Hunter in some entirely predictable situations. (Natalie Wood, Jim Backus; director, David Butler.)

HEAVEN KNOWS, MR. ALLISON (Fox) A marine corporal and a nun are marooned together on a Pacific island occupied by a Japanese task force. Island atmosphere more authentic than the curious personal relationship. (Deborah Kerr, Robert Mitchum; director, John Huston. CinemaScope, Technicolor.)

LAW OF THE STREETS (Columbia) Seedy, atmospheric drama of unemployment and crime in pre-war Paris, adapted from a story by Auguste le Breton. Less sensational and more thoroughly characterised than most of its kind. (Jean-Louis Trintignant, Jean Gaven, Raymond Pellegrin; director, Ralph Habib.)

LET'S BE HAPPY (A.B.-Pathé) An American in Edinburgh. Even with the charm of Vera-Ellen and the exoticism of Princes Street, the vital kick still eludes this Anglo-American musical. (Tony Martin, Robert Flémyng; director, Henry Levin. CinemaScope, Technicolor.)

LONELY MAN, THE (Paramount) Slow but solid family-feud Western, with an alarmingly moustachioed Jack Palance and a novel shooting-up to end with. (Anthony Perkins; director, Henry Levin. VistaVision.)

***LOST CONTINENT, THE** (Miracle) Feature-documentary about the Far East, made by a team of Italian technicians. Cleverly shot and sometimes beautiful, but a misleadingly synthetic total picture. *Reviewed.* (Directors, Leonardo Bonzi and others. CinemaScope, Ferraniacolor.)

PAY THE DEVIL (JARFID) Orson Welles as a bullying rancher in another drama of a corrupt small-town and the honest sheriff who converts the community to right-thinking. A melodrama which mistakes violence for forcefulness. (Jeff Chandler; director, Jack Arnold. CinemaScope.)

***PRINCE AND THE SHOWGIRL, THE** (Warners) Terence Rattigan's play about the brief encounter between Ruritania and the Gaiety, ably but rather heavily done. Marilyn Monroe is delightful. *Reviewed.* (Laurence Olivier, Sybil Thorndike, Jeremy Spenser; director, Laurence Olivier. Technicolor.)

QUATERMASS II (United Artists) Attempted interplanetary invasion via satellite town in the Home Counties. Some moments of neatly understated horror, but not on the whole up to the first *Quatermass*. (Brian Donlevy, John Longden; director, Val Guest.)

****RED INN, THE** (Cross-Channel) Superbly relentless playing by Carette and Françoise Rosay as two murderous hoteliers in the Ardèche. Anarchic, often wildly funny, and with a tender romantic idyll burgeoning among the corpses. *Reviewed.* (Fernandel; director, Claude Autant-Lara.)

***RISING OF THE MOON, THE** (Warners) In three short Irish episodes John Ford has rediscovered some of the pleasure he found in the rustic characters of his Will Rogers films; but not quite the old verve and charm. (Noel Purcell, Cyril Cusack, Jimmy O'Dea.)

***SAINT JOAN** (United Artists) Bernard Shaw's play adapted by Graham Greene and directed by Otto Preminger. A conscientious but rather tame version, with a Saint Joan who never carries the guns for the part. *Reviewed.* (Richard Widmark, Richard Todd, Jean Seberg.)

SEVENTH COMMANDMENT, THE (Regent) Edwige Feuillère as a defiantly elegant confidence trickster who is redeemed by true love. Sub-Lubitsch and rather slow-motion. (Jacques Dumesnil; director, Raymond Bernard.)

***SHIRALEE, THE** (M-G-M) Ealing Films' warm, unromanticised study of an Australian swagman and his small daughter, sympathetically played against a finely realised background of Australian life. *Reviewed.* (Peter Finch, Elizabeth Sellars, Dana Wilson; director, Leslie Norman.)

SILK STOCKINGS (M-G-M) Musical remake of *Ninotchka*, with Cyd Charisse as Garbo. From being a lightly ironic joke about a Russo-American encounter, it has sadly declined into a vulgar and only rarely comic anti-Soviet tirade. (Fred Astaire, Peter Lorre; director, Rouben Mamoulian. CinemaScope, Metrocolor.)

SOMETHING OF VALUE (M-G-M) American-produced account of Mau Mau terrorism and savage white retaliation. Starts as though it meant to make a statement, but trains its sights increasingly on melodrama. (Rock Hudson, Dana Wynter, Sidney Poitier; director, Richard Brooks.)

***SPIRIT OF ST. LOUIS, THE** (Warners) Billy Wilder's semi-documentary account of Lindbergh's Atlantic flight is hampered by vulgar fictional interpolations, though the flying scenes are excellent. James Stewart's Lindbergh improves with the flight. *Reviewed.* (Murray Hamilton, Patricia Smith. CinemaScope, WarnerColor.)

***TEA AND SYMPATHY** (M-G-M) A rather emasculated version of Robert Anderson's play—itsself a thin amalgam of *Young Woodley* and *The Children's Hour*. Capable but stage-bound playing by Deborah Kerr, John Kerr and Leif Ericson from the original Broadway cast. (Director, Vincente Minnelli. CinemaScope, Metrocolor.)

***TEAHOUSE OF THE AUGUST MOON, THE** (M-G-M) A slight comedy of the Americans in Okinawa, played too hard for consistent fun but with Brando superb as the Okinawan interpreter. (Glenn Ford, Machiko Kyo; director, Daniel Mann. CinemaScope, Eastman Colour.)

***THIS COULD BE THE NIGHT** (M-G-M) A friendly fairy-tale in a nightclub setting with innocence captivating siren and gambler alike. Very nicely acted, particularly by Anthony Franciosa and a brazen and predatory Julie Wilson. (Jean Simmons, Paul Douglas; director, Robert Wise. CinemaScope.)

TOMMY STEELE STORY, THE (Anglo-Amalgamated) Tommy Steele's unaffected ease as actor and uninhibited joy as singer are engaging. Inelegant but agreeably unglamorised picture of a teenage idol. *Reviewed.* (Director, Gerard Bryant.)

UNHOLY WIFE, THE (RKO) Diana Dors, back in the death-cell, recapitulates on the somewhat lunatic dealings that have landed her there. (Rod Steiger, Tom Tryon; director, John Farrow. RKO-Scope, Technicolor.)

WESTWARD HO, THE WAGONS! (Disney) A Walt Disney Western, with frontier-scout Fess Parker leading a wagon train along the Oregon trail. Short on charm but with some vigorous Indian fighting. (Kathleen Crowley, Jeff York; director, William Beaudine. CinemaScope, Technicolor.)

***YOUNG STRANGER, THE** (RKO) Story of adolescent tensions and neglected parental responsibilities. Good playing by James MacArthur as another rebel without a cause, and some sympathetic writing. (Kim Hunter, James Daly; director, John Frankenheimer.)

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July 4 & 5

Rudolph Forster, Lotte Lenja, Fritz Rasp
THE THREEPENNY OPERA (Germany 1931)
Director: G. W. Pabst

July 11

Raimu, Pierre Fresnay, Oriane Demazis
FANNY (France 1932)
Director: Marc Allegret

July 12

Raimu, Pierre Fresnay
CESAR (France 1936)
Director: Marcel Pagnol

July 18 & 19

Warner Baxter, Bebe Daniels, George Brent, Ruby Keeler,
Dick Powell, Ginger Rogers, Una Merkel
FORTY-SECOND STREET (U.S.A. 1933)
Director: Lloyd Bacon

July 25

GREEN PASTURES (U.S.A. 1936)
Directors: Marc Connelly & Wm. Keighley

July 26

Nova Pilbeam, Derrick de Marney, Percy Marmont,
Mary Clare
YOUNG AND INNOCENT (Britain 1937)
Director: Alfred Hitchcock

August 1 & 2

OLYMPISCHE SPIELE (Germany 1938) I & II
Director: Leni Riefenstahl

August 8 & 9

Celia Johnson, Trevor Howard
BRIEF ENCOUNTER (Britain 1945)
Director: David Lean

August 15

Nicolai Cherkassov
IVAN THE TERRIBLE (U.S.S.R. 1944)
Director: Eisenstein

August 16

Lisbeth Movin
DAY OF WRATH (Denmark 1943)
Director: Carl Dreyer

August 22

John Mills, Valerie Hobson
GREAT EXPECTATIONS (Britain 1946)
Director: David Lean

August 23

Kurt Meisel
WOZZECK (Germany 1947)
Director: Georg Klaren

August 29

LA TERRA TREMA (Italy 1948)
Director: Luchino Visconti

August 30

Anita Bjork, Ulf Palme
MISS JULIE (Sweden 1951)
Director: Alf Sjöberg

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